MYTH, REASON AND REVELATION

Perspectives on
and a Summary-Translation of
Three Books from Schelling's
Philosophy of Mythology and Revelation

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ABSTRACT

MYTH, REASON AND REVELATION

Perspectives on and a Summary-Translation of
Three Books from Schelling's Philosophy of
Mythology and Revelation

VICTOR CLARENCE HAYES

In this work I attempt to make available to English readers the heart of Schelling's Philosophy of Mythology and Revelation (his Spätphilosophie), providing a number of perspectives thereon, and considering Schelling's contribution to Philosophy of Religion.

The original consists of ninety lectures organized into seven books (about 2,000 pages). Selection and summary seemed mandatory, and yet the result had to convey the systematic coherence and comprehensiveness of Schelling's achievement. To exhibit the main aspects of his vision, and his principles, theory and method, three books were selected, comprising thirty-eight lectures (about 900 pages). (See Parts I - III below) This material was translated and then reduced to about one-fifth its bulk by eliminating numerous repetitions and making careful use of paraphrase. More than half the result, however, consists of passages set off in direct translation. Consistently, the original argument is followed step by step, and Schelling allowed to speak for himself. The Münchener Jubiläumsdruck of Schellings Werke, edited by Manfred Schröter, 1927-1946, was used throughout.

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The dissertation begins with a discussion of historical, philosophical and theological "Perspectives" that may be of assistance in laying hold of Schelling's thought. Then follows a synopsis of the contents of the seven books.

Part I, "Philosophy and Mythology", presents a summary-and-translation of the Historical-Critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology. Here the central question is, How is Mythology to be explained? Schelling examines "all actual and possible" explanations (religious and non-religious), explores the origins of mythologies, languages and peoples, and distinguishes various stages in man's religious development. Result: Mythology is a necessary theogonic process with objective and universal meaning. Man is the being who necessarily seeks after and posits God.

Part II, "Philosophy and Being", presents a summary-translation of the Philosophical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology. Here the central issue is, How is Mythology, this necessary theogonic process, possible? How is it rationally intelligible? To answer this, Schelling traces the successive liberations of reason from past "authorities" and its emerging autonomy in modern philosophy. He then develops a speculative metaphysics in which an autonomous reason seeks - through a form of induction or rational dialectic - to find the structure of (noetic) reality and its first principle. Result: if there is an historical succession of gods (i.e., a mythological process), it will be determined by the logical succession of the moments or potencies of being itself. This section represents the "negative" aspect of Schelling's over-all task, viz., the development of "philosophical religion".

Part III, "Philosophy and Revelation", offers a summary-translation of The Philosophy of Revelation, Part II, and represents the "positive" aspect of the Last-Philosophy: the nature and content of Revelation. Revelation is the gracious act of God that goes quite "beyond reason" but is not therefore unintelligible. Reason alone gives no certainty that God is Redeemer or even Creator, and yet, given the "facts" of Creation and Redemption, reason can make them intelligible. This "faith become intelligible" is free Philosophical Religion and is "mediated" by Christianity. Since the content and end of Revelation is Christ, there is extensive discussion of Christ's pre-existence, his influence in pre-Christian religions (Mythology) including Old Testament Judaism, his incarnate life, his "enemy" (Satan) and his relation to the Holy Spirit. The final lectures deal with the history of the Christian Church and project a vision of the religion-less religion of the future.

Ultimately, Satan and Christ - the Devil and the Logos, Wrath and Love, Darkness and Light - are seen as principles in the divine economy, moments in the "higher history" of God's life. Since the Philosophy of Mythology "can comprehend the content of Mythology but cannot explain its existence," a higher explanatory context is needed, and this the Philosophy of Revelation provides.

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A concluding section, "Retrospect", attempts to evaluate Schelling's success in handling such themes as the problem of evil, freedom and historical necessity, faith and reason, and existence and idea. Schelling is seen as both an essentialist and an existentialist ("fifty-fifty") and his existentialist ontology (metaphysical empiricism) is understood in the light of his root metaphor: reality as an emerging self overcoming blind drives.

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PERSPECTIVES

I. OVERVIEW

A. The Philosopher and his Vision

One of the most remarkable products of philosophic genius has remained virtually inaccessible to English readers for more than one hundred years. The present volume attempts to remedy this neglect.

The philosophic genius in question is Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, 1775-1854 - a precocious boy, a youth endowed with singular powers of imagination and intellect, a "prince of the Romanticists", a classical thinker, a young prodigy producing eleven major volumes before the age of thirty, the founder of Absolute Idealism and its greatest critic, an aging brooding philosopher of being and existence.[1] And the work in question is his *Philosophy of Mythology and Revelation*, his Last-Philosophy (the so-called *Spätphilosophie*), the mature product of a long life of ceaseless reflection, a work at once mysterious, profound, misunderstood, praised, maligned, and (for English readers) hitherto inaccessible.

Schelling's Last-Philosophy is the consummation of a life-time enchantment with *Philosophy* (the metaphysical quest),

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[1] On Schelling's life and work one may consult, for example, Kuno Fischer, *Schellings Leben, Werke, Lehre*, 4th Ed., (Heidelberg, 1923), being the seventh volume in Fischer's *Geschichte der neuern Philosophie*; G. L. Plitt, *Aus Schellings Leben* (In Briefen), 3 Vols. (Leipzig, 1869-1870); Hermann Zeltner, *Schelling* (Stuttgart, 1954); Friedrich Ueberweg, *A History of Philosophy*, Vol II, translated from 4th German Ed., (New York, 1873); Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, Vol. 7, Part I, Ch. 5 (Image Books Ed., 1965); *et al*.

Mythology (classical polytheisms and the whole of non-Christian religious history) and *Revelation* (the Biblical faith) with the subsequent history of Christian Church and Dogma. This threefold concern of *The Philosophy of Mythology and Revelation* was pre-figured half a century earlier in the first works of Schelling's youth - as witness (a) his Dissertation on the third chapter of Genesis (1792)[2] at the age of 17, (b) his Essay on Myths (1793)[3] at the age of 18, and (c) his paper on The Possibility of a Form of Philosophy in General (1794)[4] at the age of 19. Even earlier, however, in the spiritual environment which gave nurture to this young prodigy, one may discern the presence of these three influences. For Schelling

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[2] Schelling's Master's Dissertation: "Antiquissimi de prima malorum origine philosophematis genes. III. explicandi tentamen criticum" - an allegorical interpretation of the Biblical narrative of the Fall of Man, on the basis of the ideas of Herder. Cf. also Schelling's "De Marcione Paulinarum epistolarum emendatore" (1795) - an opuscule belonging to the area of New Testament criticism and early church history.

[3] "Über Mythen, historische Sagen und Philosopheme der ältesten Welt", in Paulus' *Memorabilien*, No. V, pp. 1-68 - an essay written in the same spirit as the above mentioned Dissertation.

[4] *Über die Moglichkeit einer Form der Philosophie überhaupt*, published in Tübingen, Jan. 9, 1795. Here Schelling held that neither a purely material principle, like Reinhold's theorem of consciousness, nor a merely formal one, like the principle of identity, can serve as the principle of Philosophy. The latter must be contained in the Ego, in which positing and posited co-incide. In the proposition Ego=Ego, form and content mutually condition each other.

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was born into the home of a learned German Lutheran pastor in the last quarter of the 18th Century, and, as Paul Tillich reminds us, it was the Protestant minister of that time who bore the higher culture of classical antiquity in "the rather barbaric countries of Northern Europe".[5] Thus it is not unintelligible that Myth, Reason and Revelation should enter into creative, inner dialogue in the brilliant son of such a parsonage.

The Philosophy of Mythology and Revelation represents an original and profound attempt at a reconciliation of Philosophy and Religion, of Intellect and Will, of Reason and Faith. Its ninety lectures, which came to fill four volumes, were produced between the years 1825 and 1854 although, as has been suggested, its roots go much deeper.

In the magnificent vision contained therein, *God himself becomes* in His world and especially in the world's religions. MYTHOLOGY is the product of a necessary theogonic process in which God has pluralized himself and is creating Himself step by step as the true God. The "birth of the gods" actually and historically takes place. From the unconscious depths of reality in which men have their roots, powers emerge to grasp man, and the theogonic process unfolds in human consciousness as its source or *subjectum agens*. God's completeness and perfection lie at the end of the process, not at the beginning. He cannot be the object of rational proofs,

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[5] Paul Tillich, *Perspectives on Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Theology*, Ed. by C E Braaten (New York, 1967) p. 80. Hereinafter referred to as *Perspectives*.

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for the "proof" of God's existence is literally the whole history of man. We discern history's meaning when we see it as the age-long process by which the divine, through the instrument of human freedom and through an eternal mediation, overcomes estrangement through love. Such an evolutionary and dynamic theology makes possible a new understanding of Good and Evil, of Creation and History, of Church and Culture. Religion cannot be dismissed as the merely subjective or imaginary creation of man, for it has objective and universal meaning.

Mythology or Paganism (i.e., the non-Christian religions) form a vast background against which Christianity appears as their truth and fulfilment and end. In the Christian REVELATION God acts freely and graciously in Christ so as to overcome the effect of the Fall and to negate the principle of His own Wrath. Revelation is an act of God which discloses His Will. We *know* what God *wills* because of what he *does* in both Creation and Redemption. His will could never be known *a priori* - it is "beyond reason", κρεῖττον τοῦ λόγου - but it is not therefore unintelligible! REASON can make intelligible the divine decision and act, producing Philosophical Religion, that religion of the Spirit which transforms "blind" faith into understanding and free affirmation. Both Mythological and Revealed religions will find in free Philosophical Religion that faith of the future - that 'courage to be' - in which all mankind will one day be united. In that day the structures of self-will, of estrangement and destruction, shall be finally done away. In that day, Christian and non-Christian, faithful and cultured, church and world, will come together in the unity and truth of a free "religion-less" religion of all mankind - not a revealed truth, but a human truth into which we shall be led by the Holy Spirit. Thus, for Schelling, the Philosophy of Revelation (i.e., the Philosophy of Christianity) is the key to the Philosophy of Religion, and the latter, as free Philosophical Religion, illuminates the significance of human life and of the whole cosmic process.

B. The New Interest in Schelling

Schelling's Last-Philosophy, largely neglected or rejected by the philosophical and theological interests of the last half of the nineteenth century, has been the object of a growing appreciative interest in the twentieth century - an interest that has begun to surface in the English-speaking philosophic world.

One reason for this new interest in Schelling is the simple desire on the part of some to explore the sources of inspiration of those important philosophers of our time who mention Schelling in order to express admiration or fascination or indebtedness - thinkers like Tillich, Jaspers, Cassirer, Heidegger. Tillich may be the most familiar case in point. He ranks Schelling with the world's greatest philosophers - Plato, Origen, Kant[6] - and has frequently acknowledged his deep indebtedness to Schelling's Last-Philosophy. For example,

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[6] See Tillich's "Reply" in The Theology of Paul Tillich Ed. by C. W. Kegley and R.W. Bretall (New York, 1956), p. 343.

> "I recall the unforgettable moment when by chance I came into possession of the very rare first edition of the collected works of Schelling in a bookstore on my way to the University of Berlin. I had no money, but I bought it anyway, and this spending of non-existent money was probably more important than all the other non-existent or sometimes existing money that I have spent. For what I learned from Schelling became determinative of my own philosophical and theological development."[7]

A second reason for the new interest in Schelling is connected with the appearance of Existentialist philosophy in the twentieth century. The widespread concern with existential themes (first emerging after World War I) and the great interest in many quarters in the philosophy of existence, are not unrelated to the fact that in this century a whole succession of world-experiences and threats of catastrophic proportions have made man thoroughly and fully problematic to himself. The belief that the roots of modern Existentialism are to be found in the post-idealist (i.e., post-Hegelian) philosophers like Schelling (and Marx, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche) has increased curiosity about his Last-Philosophy. This new mood and new interest make possible a revised, less prejudiced and more appreciative evaluation of Schelling's work.

The chief reason for this volume, however, is that Schelling's Philosophy of Mythology and Revelation has its own intrinsic worth, depth and power. The long neglect and inaccessibility of Schelling's Last-Philosophy is regrettable.

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[7] Paul Tillich, Perspectives, p. 142.

The historical, sociological and psychological study of religion - and the purely historical-critical study of scripture - has been and continues to be of the greatest value. But perhaps we have now come far enough to see once again that there is a place for a Philosophy of Religion of the kind here presented.

C. The Organization of Material in The Philosophy of Mythology and Revelation

The ninety lectures which comprize Schelling's Last-Philosophy are arranged in seven books as follows:

1856-61 Edition	The Seven Books	Lecture Numbers	1927-1946 Jubilee Edition
Pt. I Vol. 1 or Vol. 11	(I) Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology		
	* Bk 1 The Historical-Critical Introduction	1 - 10	Vol. VI
	* Bk 2 The Philosophical Introduction (i.e., Negative or Pure Rational Philosophy)	11- 24	Vol. V
Pt II Vol 2 (or Vol 12)	(II) The Philosophy of Mythology		
	Bk 1 Monotheism	1 - 6	Vol. VI
	Bk 2 Mythology	7 - 29	Suppl. Vol. 5
Pt II, Vols 3 and 4 (Vols 13, 14)	(III) The Philosophy of Revelation		
	Bk 1 Introduction	1 - 8	6
	Bk 2 Philosophy of Revelation (Pt I)	9 - 23	6
	* Bk 3 Philosophy of Revelation (Pt II)	24-37 6	Vol. VI

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The books dealt with in this volume are marked above with an asterisk (*). It should be noted that the original arrangement of these books was to some extent artificial. They may also be arranged in terms of their (a) historical or (b) philosophical concern with religion. Manfred Schröter's new edition (the Münchner Jubiläumsdruck) has re-arranged Schelling's works in this way, and we have used this edition throughout this volume.

D. A Note on the Material here presented

The problems involved in making this material available in English are numerous. Most obvious is the inordinate length of the discussion - more than 2,000 pages! - but there is also the inherent difficulty in rendering the language and thought of German metaphysics, the questionable usefulness of those lectures which reflect the limited knowledge available to Schelling in the new field of Religionsgeschichte, the exhausting recapitulations and digressions and the numerous protracted delays. Unkind critics see in the latter features the signs of Schelling's old age. Kindlier students attribute much of it to the exigencies of the lecture-form of Schelling's presentation. But Schelling himself warns that it is unavoidable.

> "It is not possible for this investigation to avoid becoming involved in numerous digressions and secondary discussions which could easily cause you to lose sight of the main line of development and the coherence of the whole."[8]

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[8] W, VI, p. 12 (The Historical-Critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology).

However this may be, one conclusion seems inescapable: to attempt to present the whole of this voluminous material in translation is neither practical nor desirable. Selection and summary are necessary, and yet the result must convey the systematic coherence and comprehensiveness of Schelling's achievement. The first step, then, was to select those books which appear to represent the three main aspects of Schelling's vision and which exhibit his principles, theory and method. These books are (i) The Historical-Critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology - ten lectures, (ii) the Philosophical Introduction to the same - fourteen lectures, and (iii) Part Two of the Philosophy of Revelation - fourteen lectures. These thirty-eight lectures, covering more than nine hundred pages, were translated completely into English, and then reduced to about one-fifth of their original bulk.[9] This reduction was accomplished by eliminating numerous repetitions while following the argument step by step (as Schelling exhorts us to do) and by making careful use of paraphrase and condensation while retaining key passages in direct translation. The constant aim was to be clear, orderly, succinct and readable while attempting to remain completely faithful to the original material. Finally, chapters, chapter headings, and sub-headings were supplied in an additional attempt to reveal the structure of Schelling's work - a structure which, in fact, is not always immediately clear in his own lengthy tables of contents.

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[9] Kuno Fischer's work on Schelling (see Footnote 1 above) runs to 850 pages. Nevertheless, his summary of the two Introductions to the Philosophy of Mythology is necessarily cursory since he reduces more than 550 pages to 22, and is forced to omit a great deal. Cassirer's summary (in his Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, Vol. II, New Haven, 1955; German Edition 1925) is difficult to discern as such. It actually runs from page 4 through page 16 with references elsewhere. But Cassirer's work evidences a pervasive dependence on Schelling, especially the Historical Critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology.

The leading concern, then, in Parts I, II and III, is to permit Schelling to speak for himself without intrusive editorialising. First, however, it may be appropriate to do two things. One is to present a summary of the contents of the seven books of Schelling's Last-Philosophy. The other is to provide a brief glimpse into the history of philosophical opinion concerning both Schelling's Last-Philosophy and his philosophical career in general. This latter will be done in terms of a discussion of historical, philosophical and theological angles of vision or perspectives that may be of assistance in laying hold of Schelling's thought.

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A Summary of the Contents of the Seven Books of Schelling's Philosophy of Mythology and Revelation

(These lectures comprise approximately two thousand pages. Here special attention is given to the four books not translated and paraphrased in this volume).

(I) INTRODUCTION TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF MYTHOLOGY

Book 1: The Historical-Critical Introduction (included)

The ten lectures in this Introduction are presented as Part I of the present volume. The central question is, How is mythology to be explained?

The first four lectures explore the adequacy of "all actual and possible" explanations of mythology. This involves a critique of non-religious interpretations (those which see myth as poetry, allegory or philosophy, and as individual or community invention) as well as religious ones (which view myth as a development out of "primitive religion," or as a creation of man's "religious instinct," or as a disintegration of an original "rational theism," or as a development out of an original revelation, or as a fragmented monotheism).

Lectures Five through Seven discourse on the origin of peoples and languages as well as gods. Result: A nation, its language and its mythology all come to birth at the same time as a result of a common "crisis." "Successive" polytheism (= mythology) is distinguished from "simultaneous" polytheism, the "relative" monotheism of pre-history from absolute monotheism, and the reflection of the mythological process in Old Testament history (Genesis) is described.

Lectures Eight and Nine, after distinguishing four stages in man's religious development, finally explain mythology as a "theogonic process" with objective and universal meaning, and understand man as the being who necessarily seeks for and posits God. Lectures Nine and Ten then define the true Philosophy of Mythology and specify its relation to History, Art and Religion. The task of a Philosophy of Mythology is to understand this theogonic process: How is it both possible and necessary? The question is taken up in the next Introduction.

Book 2: The Philosophical Introduction (included)

(Or, Presentation of Negative, i.e., Pure Rational Philosophy).

The fourteen lectures in this Introduction are presented as Part II of the present volume. The central question is, How is mythology - as a necessary theogonic process - possible? How is it rationally intelligible?

In these lectures, Schelling first surveys Reason's successive liberation from the "authorities" represented by Paganism, paganized Christianity, medieval metaphysics and authoritative revelation, and traces the emerging autonomy of reason in modern philosophy from Bacon and Descartes through Kant. He then develops a speculative metaphysics in which an autonomous reason seeks - through a form of induction or rational dialectic - to find the structure of (noetic) reality and its first or ultimate principle. Result: If there is an historical succession of gods (i.e., a mythological process) it will be determined by the logical succession of the moments or potencies of being itself. (These lectures represent the "negative" aspect of Schelling's overall task, namely, the development of "philosophical religion").

(II) THE PHILOSOPHY OF MYTHOLOGY

Book 1: Monotheism (not included)

Here, in six lectures, Schelling analyses the true nature of Monotheism which he sees as compatible with the Trinity-idea, but which he carefully distinguishes from Theism, Dualism and Pantheism.

Essentially, his analysis is in two parts: (i) the conceptual being of God (God is the one who is able to be in three forms or moments - as power-to-be, as the pure existent, and as Spirit, i.e., the power of being to posit and possess itself as such) and (ii) the actual being of God, in which the divine will separates the potencies, placing them in tension, thus giving rise to a theogonic process which is also a process of creation (the potencies of being become the causes of becoming). The end of creation (i.e., of the theogonic process) is "God-positing human consciousness" - a conclusion identical with the conclusion reached in the Historical Critical Introduction above.

Book 2: Mythology (not included)

The twenty-three lectures in this book are a sketch of the history of the mythological process from its beginning in the Fall (lectures Seven and Eight), through its various moments (Lectures Nine through Sixteen), till it flowers in the polytheisms of Egypt (Lectures Seventeen through Nineteen), India (Lectures Twenty through Twenty-two), and Greece (Lectures Twenty-five through Twenty-nine). There is a discussion of the special case of China in Lectures Twenty three and Twenty-four.

This whole account is presented more concisely in six lectures that now form the conclusion of Part I of the Philosophy of Revelation (below). To outline Schelling's history of Mythology, we have combined these two series (twenty-nine lectures)

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into a single account and included it in the summary statement of Schelling's view of the Nature of the Universal Process (q.v.).

(III) THE PHILOSOPHY OF REVELATION

Book 1: Introduction to the Philosophy of Revelation (Or, Grounding of Positive Philosophy) (not included)

Eight lectures on Philosophy, Negative Philosophy and Positive Philosophy omitted from this volume.

On Philosophy in General. Lecture One offers general remarks concerning Philosophy: it is "the most desirable science," it is "not to be replaced by poetry," but it is nonetheless "forbidding" because of the diversity, clash and rapid turnover of philosophic systems. Lecture Two offers suggestions on how to listen to philosophical lectures and how to deliver them clearly, and concludes with general comments on the academic life.

On Negative and Positive Philosophy (including historical retrospect). Lectures Three through Eight discuss the nature of Negative and Positive Philosophy - the distinction and the relationship between them. As usual, this involves Schelling in historical retrospect. Schelling writes: "I have usually prefixed to all my other lectures on philosophy a genetic development of philosophical systems from Descartes up until the most recent time" (p. 16). In these lectures, however, he ("limits" himself and) begins with Kant (actually with pre-Kantian metaphysics) in order to show how philosophy has developed into "positive" and "negative" aspects, and how the union of these two will bring philosophy to a satisfying conclusion.

In Lecture Three, therefore, Schelling describes pre-Kantian metaphysics, its foundation, its collapse even before Kant, and its "material inadequacy" (since it arrived at purely syllogistic knowledge). He then presents Kant's leading ideas, criticizes Kantian epistemology and discusses the importance of Fichte. In Lecture Four he proceeds to explain the extent to which Kant and Fichte prepared the way for "the pure science of reason" (Identity System). In Negative Philosophy (pure rational science) which deals only with c oncepts (what things are, not whether they are), reason becomes its own object (which means it deals with the actual but not with actuality). The relation of this science to experience is then discussed, as is the ambiguity in the immediate-content of reason (which content = "infinite potency of being"). Hence reason seeks a way from this arbitrariness to the truly Existent, the Existent itself, which it nevertheless possesses only in a negative concept. Lecture Five, in answering certain objections, distinguishes once again between Negative and Positive Philosophy, and points out how philosophers after Kant and Fichte (especially

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Hegel and the Hegelians) failed to recognize the logical character of Positive Philosophy.

Lecture Six offers proof "that both tendencies - negative (rational) and positive - existed in philosophy from time immemorial": in Greek philosophy before Aristotle ("the rational side was represented by the Ionian physicists, especially Heraclitus," and the counter-balance is seen in Socrates), in Aristotle himself, and in Scholastic Metaphysics. As a result of the disintegration of the latter, pure rationalism and pure empiricism separated from one another. How Positive Philosophy is related to empiricism: the concept of Philosophical Empiricism. Lecture Seven deals with the method and proof of Positive Philosophy, its relation to revelation and religion in general, and explains the expression "Historical Philosophy." Lecture Eight attempts to show that the "succession" of Negative and Positive Philosophy gives the "complete science of philosophy," and then discusses the beginning of Positive Philosophy (the pure Existent), its relation to the ontological argument, its separation from the end of Negative Philosophy, and its relation to the concept of transcendental knowledge. There follows a "transition to the Philosophy of Revelation, the general-philosophical content of which coincides with that of Positive Philosophy."

Book 2: The Philosophy of Revelation, Part I (not included)

There are fifteen lectures in this Book. They are not translated or paraphrased in this volume. The first nine lectures (Nine through Seventeen) discuss the nature of the Philosophy of Revelation, and the meaning of Spirit, Creation, Trinity, man and the mythological process. The last six lectures (Eighteen through Twenty-Three) give a shortened version of the Philosophy of Mythology.

Three Kinds of Religion. Lecture Nine discusses the significance of a Philosophy of Revelation and the extent to which it presupposes the Philosophy of Mythology. It distinguishes Natural, Revealed and Philosophical Religion, noting that the latter is mediated by the first two and (hence) arises out of a "literal" (eigentlich, wörtliche) explanation of Christianity which refuses to separate doctrine and history.

The Notion of Spirit. Lectures Ten and Eleven develop the concept of perfect (absolute) spirit by positing three "determinations" of being, i.e., they are prior to (vor, über) being. These are (a) the unmediated power to be, (b) the pure existent, and (c) the power to be posited as such. The latter is neither pure subject nor pure object but both at once, the Subject-Object which remains by itself (des beisich-Bleibenden). That which comes to be (the supra-existent, Überseiende) equals all three which, since they are not materially outside one another, are conceivable only in one Spirit (as determinations of one Spirit). Lecture Twelve declares the task of philosophy is first to ascertain the principles of being (which are not mere categories). Positive Philosophy then proves the perfect Spirit *a posteriori*. Hence there follows the positive presentation of the absolute Spirit. Its three forms are (a) the spirit existing in itself, (b) the spirit existing for itself, (c) the spirit existing by itself (= *der im an-sich-Sein für sich seiende*). The Absolute Spirit is bound to no single one of these forms. It is the all-one (All = *einigen*).

Creation. Lecture Thirteen shows "how there is given in the perfect spirit the possibility of another being different from its own eternal being," and stresses "the complete freedom of God in the acceptance of that being which is distinct from himself." "How far this being can become actual through the *mere* divine *will*." The creation process results when God freely wills to place the potencies in tension. "The real motive for the creation is the creature." "The system of monotheism = a system of free creation." Lecture Fourteen discourses largely on the meaning and importance of the concept of free creation, but includes comments on (a) the essence of understanding, (b) the relation between understanding and will, (c) the distinction between imbecility and madness, and (d) time.

The Trinity. Lecture Fifteen is a discussion of the doctrine of the Trinity (or *Dreieinheitsidee*) - its relation to historical Christianity, traces of it in ancient religion, the attempt to comprehend it philosophically (Leibniz), the way Positive Philosophy expresses it, and the Christological determinations contained in it. The Lecture ends by discussing some relevant New Testament passages, and the relation of the three personalities in the godhead. Lecture Sixteen pursues the relation of the Trinity doctrine to monotheism and to the creation, including the relation of the three personalities in the creation (Exegesis of Romans 11:36).

Man and the Mythological Process. Lecture Sixteen also begins the discussion of man - his freedom, his god-like-ness, his fall and its consequences (man has posited the world as outside of God). Lecture Seventeen explores the significance of man in the creation, his deed - the Fall - as explicable *a posteriori* though not *a priori*, his efforts to regain the lost unity, and his relation to God and to the potencies (now become extra-divine) as a result of the newly posited tension of the latter. The process arising by virtue of this tension is mythological. The role of the second potency in this process and an explanation of the phrase "Son of Man." How and why God (the Father) allows the world to persist despite the catastrophe (the ὀργὴ θεοῦ). The various aeons (world-times). Transition to the brief presentation of the Philosophy of Mythology (Lectures Eighteen through Twenty-three) which I have incorporated in the Summary of Schelling's view of the Universal Process (below).

Book 3: The Philosophy of Revelation, Part II (included)

These fourteen lectures have been summarized in Part III of this volume. They deal with the nature of Revelation and discuss the presuppositions, purpose and content of the Philosophy of Revelation.

Since the content of revelation is "Christ" (the potency A^2), Schelling lectures on Christ's pre-existence, his influence in the non-Christian religions (including Old Testament Judaism), his incarnation (the person, death, resurrection and exaltation of Christ), his "enemy" (Satan) and the world of spirits, and his relation to the coming of the Holy Spirit. The last two lectures deal with the history of the Christian Church and end by projecting a vision of the religion-less religion of the future.

II

SOME HISTORICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

A. Reasons for the Neglect of the Last-Philosophy

A number of reasons may be suggested to account for the neglect of Schelling's Last-Philosophy. In the first place, the material did not appear in print officially until Karl Schelling edited and published his father's Collected Works in 1856-61. Meanwhile, the Berlin lectures (1841-2), as Paul Tillich has pointed out, "were prematurely published by an enemy of Schelling and, of course, poorly published, which made him many critics, some of them contemptuous of his work."[10] Furthermore, it seems clear that the judgments of Schelling's contemporaries or near contemporaries were prejudiced. His critics, as Emil Fackenheim has noted, were either theologians, positivists or Hegelians, and what Schelling had to say pleased none of them.

> "If they were theologians, they looked to Schelling for an apologetic which they did not get, nor were meant to get. If they were positivists, they had even less sympathy with Schelling than with Hegel. And if they were Hegelians (as most of them were),

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[10] Paul Tillich, Perspectives, p. 150. The unauthorized publications of Schelling's lectures were by Frauenstadt (Schellings Vorlesungen in Berlin, Berlin, 1842) and by Paulus (Die endlich offenbar gewordene positive Philosophie der Offenbarung, der allgemein Prüfung dargelegt von H. E. G. Paulus, Darmstadt, 1843).

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> they saw the most important criterion of judgment in systematic completeness, the very point in which Schelling was weakest; further, they were bound to regard his development after 1804 as an aberration or an outright betrayal."[11]

Numerous harsh and even contemptuous comments may be found among those who bothered to take note of the appearance of the Philosophy of Mythology and Revelation. Michelet, the Hegelian, declared it "a shameful apostasy such as has never been committed in the history of philosophy."[12] Ferdinand Christian Baur decided the lectures were "balderdash" and wondered how anyone could build so much on so little.[13] In the same mood,

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[11] Emil Fackenheim, "Schelling's Conception of Positive Philosophy" in Review of Metaphysics, Vol. VII, No. 4 (June 1954) p. 564.

[12] Michelet, Entwicklungsgeschichte der neuesten deutschen Philosophie (Berlin, 1843) p. 130. Quoted in Emil Fackenheim's "Schelling's Philosophy of Religion" in the University of Toronto Quarterly, Vol. XXII, No. 1 (October 1952), p. 1.

[13] F. C. Baur, Geschichte der christlichen Kirche, Vol. V, Part. III, p. 405. Baur uses the word "Galimathias", i.e., jumble of words, grandiloquent nonsense.

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Rosenkranz chided: "It appears that some attach the adjective 'Christian' to a thought, like a fig-leaf, as if they had to be ashamed of it in its nakedness."[14] And Edward Zeller concluded that the whole system was "a verbose, muddled, abstruse Scholasticism; a disagreeable mixture of speculation,.... cloudy theosophy, arbitrary Biblical exegesis and ecclesiastical dogma."[15]

Earlier in the century, Idealist philosophy, as Zeltner observes, had been "an essential factor in the formation of the new world-view of the German middle class." It had claimed scientific character and at the same time largely assumed the function of poetry and even religion. Its identification with the German middle class, however, meant that Idealism "was to experience with peculiar intensity the attacks of the anti-bourgeois thinkers which arose after the mid-century against this world-view - in particular, the opposition of Kierkegaard, Marx and Nietzsche."[16] Schelling, of course, had moved radically beyond his own earlier Idealism, but the truth is he never repudiated its insights - "how should I give up that philosophy which I myself founded earlier, the discovery of my youth."[17] He was adjudged guilty by association. It is true that Schelling had been useful to the critics of Hegel (it was to do battle with the Hegelian Philosophy of Religion that the sixty-six year old, semi-retired Schelling had been called to Berlin in 1841), but this usefulness ceased when Hegel's system was no longer a central issue in the fields of metaphysics, religion and politics.[18]

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[14] Rosenkranz, Schelling (Danzig, 1843) p. xxxiv. Quoted in E. Fackenheim, art. cit., University of Toronto Quarterly, Vol. XXII, No. 1, p. 1.

[15] Eduard Zeller, Geschichte der deutschen Philosophie, 2d. Ed., Munich, 1875. pp. 560-562. Quoted in Kuno Fischer, op. cit., pp. 715f.

[16] Hermann Zeltner, Schelling (Stuttgart, 1954), p. 4. (My translation).

The dominant fact is that when Schelling's Last-Philosophy finally appeared in the second half of the nineteenth century, times had passed it by! No longer was there climate or audience for his thought. A new day was dawning - a new era of practical politics ("the politics of money and steel"); new found faiths in materialism and economic man; and a renewed natural science which, like the science of history and its associated disciplines, was "struggling out of the embrace of idealist philosophy" and moving toward a non-speculative Positivism.[19] Even in the area of theology and religion, both Schelling and his ecclesiastical adversaries were left behind by distinct shifts in the focus of theological attention (away, for example, from the mid-century concern with Christology). Together, such new interests seem to have made it inevitable that Schelling's mature thought would have been largely misunderstood and dismissed.

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[17] Schelling, Works (Münchner Jubiläumsdruck), VI, p. 758. The words are from his First Lecture in Berlin, Nov.. 15, 1841.

[18] Cf. F. de Wolfe Bolman Jr., The Ages of the World (New York, 1942), p. 7. As Bolman notes, however, Schelling did speak on politics, early and late. Cf. Gertrud Jäger, Schellings politische Anschauungen, Berlin, 1939.

[19] H. Zeltner, op. cit., p. 4. Cf. also Gabriel Marcel, "Schelling fut-il un précurseur de la philosophie de l'existence?" in Revue de Metaphysique et de Morale, Jan-Mar 1957, No. 1, p. 73. Marcel thinks Schelling was ignored because philosophers were preoccupied with restoring a harmony or continuity between philosophy and science.

B. Some Myths about Schelling

As a result of combined prejudice, neglect, and ignorance of the Last-Philosophy, a stereotyped estimate of Schelling gained currency and persists to this day. There appear to be three "myths" about this philosopher: (i) that his real significance is as a link between Fichte and Hegel, (ii) that his philosophizing lacks continuity, and (iii) that the late Schelling degenerated into obscurantism and obfuscation. Recently, for example, the present writer approached an eminent Church Historian - who was also a German - to discuss Schelling's ideas, and found the whole subject dismissed in a phrase: "Schelling? He's a mystery boy!" Aspects of this stereotyped-Schelling are well described by Emil Fackenheim:

> "When Schelling died..., his contemporaries' opinion of him might be summarized as follows. A precocious thinker, Schelling made a great contribution to philosophy around the year 1800, when he was still in his twenties. But he lacked system and thoroughness, and his contribution was soon assimilated and superseded by the system of Hegel. Moreover, he lacked stability. While Hegel spent his whole life working out his system, Schelling changed his standpoint so often as to drive his interpreters to despair.

> Finally, at least from 1804 on (when Schelling was not yet thirty) these changes were for the worse, for he moved more and more toward mysticism and obscurantism.
>
> This appraisal became conventional opinion, and has remained conventional opinion until this day. In practically any history which bothers with Schelling at all one can find this threefold condemnation of his work: that it consists of a number of more or less disconnected systems; that none of these is properly worked out; and that from 1804 on, they get worse and worse."[20]

Bertrand Russell, in his history of Western Philosophy, perfectly typifies the indifferent, for he dismisses the whole of Schelling's thought - and we remind the reader that this means twelve 600-page volumes - with just three cursory sentences bearing the partial image of the stereotype:

> "Fichte's immediate successor, Schelling was more amiable but not less subjective. He is closely associated with the German Romantics; philosophically, though famous in his day, he is not important. The important development from Kant's philosophy was that of Hegel."[21]

Undoubtedly it was John Watson who did much to spread the first myth among English speaking philosophers. In Watson's view (1882), Schelling's only significance is as a link in the supposed genealogical series Kant-Fichte-Schelling-Hegel. Schelling is "only Hegel in germ and Hegel with much that is most valuable in him left out."[22]

A number of Schelling students have attacked this facile dismissal of Schelling. Croce mentions Leo Tolstoy's warning against "supposed genealogical series" (e.g., that of Balzac-Flaubert-Zola) and insists that "every genius begins again from the beginning, and is born only of himself. "The problems of Fichte", Croce continues, "are not those of Kant, nor the problems of Schelling those of Fichte, and so on, and if the later seem to arise out of the earlier it is because the later thought is richer and contains the earlier."[23] Our usual view of German Idealism, as Walter Schulz points out, is derived from this notion that there are three steps which lead from the early Fichte through the early Schelling to the consummation of German Idealism in Hegel. But it is precisely this notion, Schulz insists, that requires revision, "since it overlooks the fact that both the late Fichte and the late Schelling conceived ways of putting the philosophical question which were not and could not be approached by Hegel."[24] Hermann Zeltner concurs: these three great philosophers of German Idealism are "so individualistic that it is scarcely possible to bring them to a common denominator." In fact, he adds,

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[20] E. Fackenheim, art. cit., Review of Metaphysics, VII, 4, p. 563.

[21] B. Russell, A History of Western Philosophy (New York, 1945), pp. 703, 718.

[22] John Watson, Schelling's Transcendental Idealism (Chicago, 1882), pp. 3, 193, 251. Cf. Gutmann, Schelling: Of Human Freedom (Chicago, 1936), p. xviii.

> "there is serious opposition among them which is by no means merely personal. Certainly Schelling and Hegel stand closer to one another than either does to Fichte, and Dilthey's attempt at classification - one

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[23] Benedetto Croce, History as the Story of Liberty (Meridian M17, First published in English in 1941) p. 328

[24] Walter Schulz, Die Vollendung des deutschen Idealismus in der Spätphilosophie Schellings (Stuttgart, 1955). From the Foreword.

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> which contrasts Fichte's Idealism of Freedom with the Objective Idealism of Schelling and Hegel - surely touches on something essential. But later there arise between Schelling and Hegel oppositions which, if it be possible, are even more violent and insuperable."[25]

Already in 1890 the distortion involved in viewing Schelling only in terms of this genealogical series had been noted and refuted by Lucien Herr,[26] but the myth dies hard. In 1927 T. L. Haering can declare:

> "In no other case has the history of philosophy been so roughly treated in its psychological and historical relations of dependence as with the pretended line of descent: Kant-Fichte-Schelling-Hegel. In no other case have the relative originality and the independent development of personality been so sacrificed to a scheme of logical construction apparently simple and luminous."[27]

Finally, in describing this supposed line of descent as "a misreading of the history of modern philosophy", James Gutman (1936) suggests an entirely different perspective.

> "It is to a philosophic tradition that has often passed as theology that Schelling might be linked, if one were mindful of the resemblance between the problems and preoccupations of Schelling's thought and those of Neo-Platonic Christianity in Patristic writings, in the Lutheran Reformation and in traditional Protestant mysticism."[28]

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[25] Hermann Zeltner, op. cit., p. 1

[26] Croce (op. cit., p. 328) refers to Herr's article on Hegel in the Grande Encyclopedie. It may now be consulted in Herr, Choix d'ecrits (Paris, 1932), I, pp. 117-119.

[27] T. L. Haering, Hegel, sein Wollen und sein Werk (Leipzig-Berlin, 1929), I, pp. 56f. Quoted in Croce, op. cit., p. 328

[28] James Gutmann, Schelling: Of Human Freedom (Chicago, 1936), p. Lii.

C. One Philosophy or Many?

We said in the preceding section that the second myth about Schelling stressed the discontinuity in his thought. A mere glance down the lengthy list of Schelling's works is enough to make one wonder: Is this "philosophy" merely a loose series of very different philosophies? Or are there systematic connections, threads hidden perhaps beneath the surface, which provide continuity and coherence? C. M. Schröder believes this question of the inner unity of Schelling's philosophy might be regarded as the central question in Schelling-studies, and has drawn attention to some of the varied and opposed estimates.[29]

There are those for whom disunity, discontinuity and continual transformation are the chief features of Schelling's philosophic development. O. Braun (1906, 1907)[30] considered Schelling's thought to have undergone major re-castings, and discerned "several completely different concepts of God." Jaganath Das Choudhury (1926)[31] doubted that Schelling was even aware of the breaks between the various periods of his development. For Windelband (1878-80) there were five chief divisions in this development, and when Schelling insisted that all his writings were just "pieces of a whole", Windelband decided that we could do the philosopher no greater injustice than to "take him at his word."[32] Typical of those historians of philosophy who light-heartedly perpetuate this notion is R. A. Tsanoff (1953) who assures us: "in his speculative voyages (Schelling) sailed through four or five systems of thought."[33] Finally, we may cite an early view, that of J. E. Erdmann (1874) who considered the Identity System (with its "Naturalism enthusiastic for antiquity") and the Later Philosophy (with its "Theosophy reminiscent of the Middle Ages") to be unbridgable opposites, the inner agreement of which Schelling nowhere demonstrates.[34]

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[29] C.M.Schröder, Das Verhaltnis von Heidentum und Christentum in Schellings Philosophie der Mythologie und Offenbarung (München, 1936) pp. 11-15

[30] O Braun, "Die Entwicklung des Gottesbegriffes bei Schelling", in Zeitschrift für Philosophie und philosophische Kritik, Bd. 131 (1907), pp. 141, 113. Also, O. Braun, Schellings geistige Wandlungen in den Jahren 1800-10, Jena, 1906.

[31] J.D. Choudhury, Das Unendlichkeitsproblem in Schellings Philosophie (Berlin, 1926), p. 16.

Now there can be no denying the fact that between Schelling's youth and old age a great deal occurs. His philosophical reflection is a restless process, and it is possible to point to a succession of phases, interests and influences: the early period under the influence of Fichte's Ego-philosophy; the Romantic Philosophy of Nature which attempted to show the indwelling of the potential spirit in all natural objects and its coming to fulfilment in man; the Identity-system which developed to the extreme the Spinozistic principle of the ontological unity of everything in the one eternal Substance, viz., the Absolute which is beyond all antitheses, beyond subject and object, spirit and matter, ideal and real; the Philosophy of Art in which art became a religion-substitute, and artistic intuition the way to see God; the Philosophy of Freedom; and the final Philosophy of religious consciousness which became a form of speculative theism.

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[32] W. Windelband, History of Modern Philosophy (First German Edition 1878-1880), II, 4, p. 239

[33] R. A. Tsanoff, The Great Philosophers (New York, 1953), p. 469.

[34] J. E. Erdmann, Geschichte der neueren Philosophie, III, 2 (1874), p. 541.

Despite these transformations, however, there have always been those who saw no definite breaks in the development of Schelling's thought. Hubert Beckers (1875)[35], for example, considered Schelling's whole philosophy to be just a continuance of the principle of Freedom - "the freedom and independence of the spirit" is its underlying theme. Eduard von Hartmann (1897)[36] sought to establish an underlying unity, although he thought this could be done only by ignoring the "romantic-reactionary" features of the Late-Philosophy. E. Schertel (1911)[37], however, regarded Schelling's system as "an organic structure" in which the beginning resides in the end and the end in the beginning.

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[35] H. Beckers, *Schellings Geistesentwicklung in ihrem inneren Zusammenhang* (München, 1875), p. 28.

[36] E. von Hartmann, *Schellings philosophische System*, (Leipzig, 1897), p. 221.

[37] E. Schertel, *Schellings Metaphysik der Persönlichkeit* (Jena, 1911), p. 14.

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For P. Genths (1926)[38] the problems of Schellingian philosophy formed, by and large, the constants, while their solutions provided the variables. In 1923, Kuno Fischer[39] distinguished three or four epochs and yet insisted that "nowhere is there an affirmative, definite break" in Schelling's developing thought. And E. Stamm (1930)[40] was convinced that the later philosophy offered a synthesis of all the earlier periods.

With this last opinion Paul Tillich is in agreement. Tillich's early work on Schelling (1912)[41] understood the antinomies in Schelling's thought as having their reconciliation and synthesis in the Last-Philosophy, especially that primary and most profound antinomy between mysticism (the feeling of unity with the Absolute) and the consciousness of guilt. The Last-Philosophy is but a completion of the beginnings, the over-arching unity of opposites and periods. In similar vein, Walter Schulz (1955) expressed the conviction that Schelling remained an idealist to the end, carrying idealism to its extreme limit.[42] And Gabriel Marcel (1957), in supporting Schulz' thesis, observes: "the importance of this (thesis) was stressed for us by Heidegger last summer."[43]

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[38] P. Genths, Die Identitätsphilosophie Schellings in ihrem Verhältnis zur Religion (Würzburg, 1926), p. 11.

[39] Kuno Fischer, op. cit., p. 690

[40] E. Stamm, Der Begriff des Geistes bei Schelling (Göttingen, 1930), p.8.

[41] Paul Tillich, Mystik und Schuldbewusstsein in Schellings philosophischer Entwicklung (Güttersloh, 1912).

[42] Walter Schulz, op. cit.,

An event with an important bearing on this dispute was the publication of the text discovered in 1913 by Franz Rosenzweig, viz., "Das alteste Systemprogramm des deutschen Idealismus". This publication encouraged the conviction that there was a great deal less discontinuity in Schelling's thought than some had previously imagined. As Marcel points out,[44] this text, which dates from 1796 when Schelling was only 21, does not bear the author's name and is written in the hand of Hegel. Nevertheless, Rosenzweig, Schulz, Jaspers and others are convinced the text is Schelling's and find in it a program which corresponds in advance to the complete development of a philosophy whose direction has in reality remained constant. Here, for example, we hear the call for a Mythology of Reason, a mythology in the service of the idea. Philosophy must become mythological![45]

Father Copleston, who also discerns a visible continuity in Schelling's thought - the whole "is linked together by the theme of the relation between the finite and the infinite" - cites this System-program in evidence. He summarizes as follows:

> "The projected system would proceed from the idea of the ego or self as an absolutely free being by way of the positing of the non-ego to the sphere of speculative

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[43] G. Marcel, art. cit., Revue de Metaphysique et de Morale, Jan-Mar 1957, No. 1, p. 74.

[44] G. Marcel, Ibid., p. 74f.

[45] See especially the discussion in W. Schulz, op. cit., pp. 304-306.

> physics. It would then proceed to the sphere of the human spirit. The principles of historical development would have to be laid down, and the ideas of a moral world, of God and of the freedom of all spiritual beings would have to be developed. Further, the central importance of the idea of beauty would have to be shown, and the aesthetic character of the highest act of reason. Finally, there would have to be a new mythology, uniting philosophy and religion."[46]

Then, commenting on this projected program of the young Schelling, Copleston succinctly observes:

> "This program is illuminating. On the one hand it illustrates the element of discontinuity in Schelling's thought. For the fact that he proposes to start from the ego reveals the influence of Fichte, an influence which grew progressively less as time went on. On the other hand, the program illustrates the element of continuity in Schelling's philosophizing. For it envisages the development of a philosophy of Nature, a philosophy of History, a philosophy of art, a philosophy of freedom and a philosophy of religion and mythology, themes which were to occupy his attention in turn. In other words, though Schelling at first gave the impression of being a disciple of Fichte, his interests and bent of mind were already apparent at the beginning of his career."[47]

Today, then, one may feel assured that Schelling's philosophy is no succession of discrete systems, but a continuous reflection, each solution raising further problems requiring new solutions. "The modern student who fails to perceive a connection," warns Emil Fackenheim, "does well to suspect that the fault lies, not with Schelling, but with himself."[48] We may even speak of a planned continuity in which, in a sense, the beginning and the end of Schelling's philosophizing co-incide.

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[46] F. Copleston, A History of Philosophy, Vol. 7, Part I, (Image Books Ed., 1965), p. 126

[47] Ibid.

[48] E. Fackenheim, art. cit., Review of Metaphysics, VII, 4, p. 565.

This conclusion, however, simply raises a new question. If Schelling remained an idealist to the end, as some have insisted, how can he be regarded as an authentic precursor of Existentialism, as many others hold?

D. Was Schelling an Existentialist?

This, according to Marcel, is the most important question we can ask ourselves about Schelling.[49]

In relatively recent years, a number of scholars and students of Nineteenth Century thought have declared Schelling deserving of the title "existentialist" or "philosopher of existence" or "precursor of modern existentialism", and have intended their judgments to be honorific not pejorative. Their number includes Karl Löwith, Paul Tillich, Walter Kaufman, William Barrett and Emil Fackenheim. Others, like Gabriel Marcel, Frederick Copleston and Kenneth Hamilton have not been too sure. First, we consider the affirmative claims.

Paul Tillich calls Schelling "the first great critic of essentialist thinking since Blaise Pascal (1623-1662) who was in a way the predecessor of all existentialists."[50] While still in his twenties, Schelling had initiated the romantic Philosophy of Nature and kept pace with its changing periods until what Tillich calls "the decisive turning point" when "in Schelling the second phase of Romanticism became Existentialism." This emphasis dominated Schelling's later period, hence, in Tillich's judgment, the last or "Positive" philosophy represents the philosophically decisive break with Hegel and the beginnings of modern Existentialism.[51] Walter Kaufman agrees that Schelling is not only the leading philosopher among the German Romanticists but a precursor of the Existentialists.[52] And Marcel mentions thinkers, especially in Germany - he cites Reisner and Knittermeyer - who see in Schelling a precursor of the philosophy of existence.[53]

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[49] G. Marcel, art. cit., p. 73

[50] P. Tillich, Perspectives, p. 141

In wider perspective, Tillich understands the revolt of Schelling, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Feuerbach against Hegel as giving rise to existential elements in their thought which makes them all "sources of present day Existentialism."[54] William Barrett concurs: "Existentialism is the counter-Enlightenment come at last to philosophic expression."[55] And

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[51] Paul Tillich, Perspectives, p. 142. Cf. also Tillich's "Reply" in C.W. Kegley and R. W. Bretall, The Theology of Paul Tillich (New York, 1956), p. 343.

[52] W. Kaufman, Nietzsche (New York, Meridian, 1956) p.11.

[53] G. Marcel, art. cit., p. 73. Marcel cites E. Reisner's view (in an article in the Neue Deutsche Hefte, Jan. 1956): "What Schelling calls Positive Philosophy coincides essentially with the pensee existante of Kierkegaard and with the philosophy of actual existence;" and Knittermeyer's judgment (reported by Reisner, art. cit.) that Schelling in grappling with the great issues of his time was a century ahead of his age and the herald of a development which today has reached its height.

[54] Paul Tillich, Perspectives, p. 243.

[55] William Barrett, Irrational Man (A Study in Existential Philosophy), Anchor Books Ed., 1962, p. 275. Barrett's view of Existentialism as part of an anti-rationalist revolt is seen by Alasdair MacIntyre as "a dangerous half-truth". See A Critical History of Western Philosophy, Ed. by O. J. O'Connor (New York, 1964), p. 510. MacIntyre, of course, represents a tradition that cannot find much sympathy with Existentialism.

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Karl Löwith can say of Schelling's Berlin lectures (the 1841 lectures on the Philosophy of Mythology and Revelation): "with this last event in the history of classic German philosophy begins the 'philosophy of existence' which Marx and Kierkegaard developed in opposition to Hegel, the one externally, the other internally."[56]

These Berlin lectures launched the Positive Philosophy. They began in an atmosphere of great expectancy - "the tension is unbelievable"[57] - and with such names as Kierkegaard, Bakunin, F. Engels and Burchardt in the initially packed audience. In these lectures Schelling attacked Hegel's ontology as merely "negative", i.e., capable of grasping only potential not real being, and proposed a "positive" philosophy that would deal with real existence. Ever since the Middle Ages, as Löwith reminds us, certain philosophers (e.g., Anselm, Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Wolff) had held that in God (but not in creatures) essence and existence are one. Kant had rejected this claim of the ontological argument on the grounds that the "existence" of a "concept" cannot be separated from the concept itself. That is, "existence" is not a predicate; the positive quality of "existence" lies outside the "whatness" or essence of things. But in Hegel, essence and existence were again united not only in God but in everything real. It was to repudiate this equation of essence and existence that Schelling once more insisted upon the contrast between "Positive" and "Negative" Philosophy.[58] God, Schelling insists, is "beyond pure thought."[59]

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[56] Karl Löwith, From Hegel to Nietzsche (Doubleday Anchor Book, 1967; originally published in German 1941), p. 113. Cf. also E. Fackenheim, art. cit., Review of Metaphysics, VII, 4, p. 566: "It is no accident that existentialists tend to see the decisive event for modern metaphysics in the collapse of Hegelianism in the middle of the nineteenth century; and it is a most suggestive fact that practically every existentialist seems to have to struggle with Hegel. This would appear to indicate an agreement that one can neither return to a pre-idealist metaphysics, nor remain with idealism. This is precisely the conviction which gives rise to Schelling's positive philosophy."

[57] Plitt, Aus Schellings Leben. In Briefen. III (Leipzig, 1870), p. 63.

To be sure, Schelling's criticism of Hegel - which is also his criticism of himself as the founder of Absolute Idealism - and his re-orientation toward a philosophy of existence, is present in earlier works, e.g., in his Preface to a work by Victor Cousin (1834), in his Munich Lectures on the History of Modern Philosophy (1827), and in the much earlier Treatise On Human Freedom (1809). Indeed, this latter is really the turning point, for it is here that the concept of freedom breaks into the concept of absolute identity, and it is here that a new sense of the dark depths of the Unconscious, of driving self-will, of evil and sin and alienation (the Fall), emerges to shatter the system of Absolute Reason.[60] (Behind this are not only certain maturing life-experiences, but the reading of the mystical writings of Boehme and Oetinger.)

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[58] Cf. Karl Löwith, _Op. cit._, pp. 113-119. (Cf. Whitehead's description of Philosophy as "the critique of all abstractions")

[59] _W_, V, 596.

[60] See J. Gutmann (Tr.) _Schelling_: _Of Human Freedom_ (1936), pp. 4, 26ff, 34ff, 42f, 49-51, 54, 59, 63, _et al._

In all the above, however, Schelling is going beyond Hegel, not back to Kant. For Schelling, as for Kierkegaard, the reason why existence is not a concept (or predicate) is because it is too rich, too dense, too concrete to be reduced to essence or grasped in *a priori* fashion or caught in the nets of logic. "He pointed to freedom and existence as facts which no possible dialectical system could absorb; the step from rational system to existence was a *metabasis eis allo genos*."[61] It is because Schelling's Positive Philosophy deals with the actual situation in time and space, that Tillich (and others) insists:"the term 'Positive philosophy' expresses the same thing that we call Existentialism today."[62]

There is, however, another side to all this, as we said. Father Copleston is characteristically cautious. Referring to the tendency to see in Schelling's Positive Philosophy, and in his emphasis on existence and freedom, "an anticipation of some themes of Existentialism", Copleston warns us that "the desire to find anticipations of later ideas in illustrious minds of the past should not blind us to the great differences between the idealist and existentialist movements." Nevertheless, he concedes, the tendency "has some limited justification."[63]

But Kenneth Hamilton concedes much less. He refuses to agree that existential categories take over in Schelling's

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[61] E. Fackenheim, *art. cit.*, *Review of Metaphysics*, VII, 4, p. 567.

[62] P. Tillich, *Perspectives*, p. 150. Cf. Marcel, *art. cit.*, p. 73

[63] F. Copleston, *op. cit.*, p. 181f

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critique of Hegel.

> "Schelling's modification of Hegel does not break with the idealist claim to grasp reality as a whole. The speculative basis of truth is maintained, although it is widened from the pure thought of Hegel so as to include revelation. There is no surrender here to existential categories, because revelation is defined in essentialist terms. To the idealistic view, revelation is not something coming from a realm inexplicable to the thinker."[64]

This criticism is interesting, but it seems extreme in the light of the text presented in this volume. Idealism, of course, has no corner on the "claim to grasp reality as a whole". In a sense, Existentialism also makes this claim and may feel itself better oriented to succeed in its purpose. Furthermore, we must not be misled by the statement that for Schelling "revelation is *defined* in essentialist terms." If this is taken to mean that Schelling thinks he can deduce the content of Revelation *a priori*, it is manifestly false. Schelling believes nothing of the kind, as witness Part II, Chapter Four, and Part III, Chapter One, below. Revelation is a "free act of will", God's gracious act, and in *this* sense it *does* come "from a realm inexplicable [a priori] to the thinker," even though, once given, the *fact* of Revelation is not necessarily unintelligible (i.e., *a posteriori*). Hamilton's comment should not be allowed to blur this distinction which is central for Schelling. Schelling's Positive Philosophy, or "Philosophical Religion" is faith seeking and achieving understanding. In Philosophical Religion, faith and reason become one.

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[64] Kenneth Hamilton, *A Critique of Paul Tillich* (New York, 1963), p. 182f. Cf. also Leo Gabriel, *Existenzphilosophie* (p. 50), who notes that while Schelling ends up with a positive, speculative, religious philosophy, Kierkegaard was not interested in knowledge at all.

Marcel believes, following Schulz, that Schelling carried Idealism to its limit, and in doing so made contact with existential thought but did not develop it, so that his work "hangs fire" (_versagt_ _im_ _Urteil_ _wie_ _im_ _Handeln_). Schelling prepared the ground, (but in a completely different and much less direct way than did Kierkegaard), not so much for the philosophy of existence as for "a renewal of ontology on non-traditional foundations." Among contemporary thinkers, concludes Marcel, it is Heidegger who is Schelling's true successor, although the latter himself refuses to explain the kinship.[65]

Now the truth of the matter, as Schelling himself might put it, is that both sides in this dispute are one-sidedly right (and therefore one-sidedly wrong). Schelling is a semi-existentialist or, better, he is _both_ essentialist _and_ existentialist at the same time in his Last-Philosophy. He brings German Idealism to its completion, its limit, and in that very moment he heralds the philosophy of existence. Reason becomes "ecstatic", "mythological", and Mythology becomes "rational".

On the one hand, we can explain the positive sense in which Schelling was an existentialist by "defining" Existentialism as a certain _posture_ or stance and as a concern with certain characteristic _themes_. If "existentialist" indicates that posture assumed "whenever men have insisted on the limits of reason, declaring that logic alone cannot account for the guilt, dread, anxiety, alienation and latent meaninglessness of life,"[66] then Schelling was an Existentialist. If Existentialism tries to produce a total picture of human reality and therefore feels compelled to include the absurd, the irrational, the subterranean Furies within us, even granting them a central place in the total human economy, then Schelling was an Existentialist. If an Existentialist is one who speaks of alienation and estrangement, of sin and death, of the basic fragility and contingency of life, of the impotence of reason confronted by the depth of existence, of the Abyss that separates essence and existence, and of man who must always exist in untruth as well as truth, than Schelling was an Existentialist. Tillich can well observe: "there is hardly one category in twentieth century existentialist poetry, literature, philosophy and indirectly the visual arts which you cannot find in these lectures"[67] (i.e., the Last-Philosophy).

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[65] Marcel, _art. cit._, p. 81

Existentialism, however, "cannot stand on its own legs," as Tillich puts it. "Actually it has no legs."

> "Existentialism... is always based on a vision of the essential structure of reality. In this sense it is based on essentialism and cannot live without it... If you say that man's structure is distorted in space and time, or that it is 'fallen,' then you must have something from which it is fallen. You must have

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[66] Wm. Barrett, op. cit., pp. 22, 28, 34, 26. On the meaning of the term "Existentialism" see Roger Shinn's The Existentialist Posture, and Maurice Friedmann's The Worlds of Existentialism.

[67] Paul Tillich, Perspectives, p. 150

> some structure that is distorted in time and space. So mere existentialism does not exist. But it can be the main emphasis of a philosophical work and even of a whole period in philosophy."[68]

Schelling explicitly understands this. He never casts away the philosophy of essence which he and Hegel had worked out in their youth. He simply completed it with the philosophy of existence. The latter needs the former, and the former at its limit demands the latter. Positive and Negative Philosophy together make up the whole of Philosophy. Concludes Tillich,

> "Therefore there is an essentialist framework in his mind. Existentialism is possible only as an element in a larger whole, as an element in a vision of the structure of being in its created goodness, and then as a description of man's existence within that framework. The conflicts between his essential goodness and his existential estrangement cannot be seen at all without keeping essentialism and existentialism together. Theology must see both sides, man's essential nature, wonderfully and symbolically expressed in the Paradise story, and man's existential condition under sin, guilt and death" (as portrayed in the myth of the Fall).[69]

For Schelling, as for Tillich, pure Essentialism and pure Existentialism were equally impossible. Pure Essentialism is impossible, says Tillich~~, if~~ one is personally in the human situation; it becomes metaphysical arrogance (as in Hegel). And pure Existentialism is impossible because man "can and must express his encounter with the world in terms of language", hence, of universals.[70] Thus, when we ask, from our vantage point and in our terminology, "Was Schelling an Existentialist?" we can suppose him answering as Tillich later did: "I say, fifty-fifty".[71] And when we wonder precisely how Schelling saw the relation between the structures of reason and man's existence, some words of William Barrett express a point with which Schelling would surely be in agreement:

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[68] P. Tillich, Perspectives, pp. 142f [69] Ibid., p. 245.

[70] Ibid. [71] Ibid.

> "Contrary to the rationalist tradition, we now know that it is not his reason that makes man man, but rather that reason is a consequence of that which really makes him man. For it is man's existence as a self-transcending self that has forged and formed reason as one of its projects. As such, man's reason is specifically human (but no more and no less than his art and his religion) and to be revered."[72]

E. Intellect or Will?

Another important perspective on Schelling may be gained by seeing his whole thought as a profound attempt to resolve the tension between intellect and will.

In Paul Tillich's view, it is precisely the creative tension between intellect and will that fills all Western philosophy with life and movement. On the one hand, the rationalist tradition insists on the metaphysical primacy of intellect, and its protagonists go back to Aristotle and include Thomas Aquinas and the Dominicans, medieval nominalists, British empiricists, German classical philosophers and modern linguistic analysts. On the other hand, Voluntarism, the philosophy in which the element of "will" is decisive, has a lineage that stretches from Augustine through St. Francis and the Franciscans, Bonaventura (with his doctrine of the primacy of will as love), Duns Scotus, the German mystics and Luther, to Schelling and modern Voluntarism.[73]

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[72] William Barrett, op. cit., p. 279

[73] See Tillich's discussion in Perspectives, pp. 191-197

There is, however, a breakthrough of the element of will in the writings of Kant (for example, in the priority he gave to practical reason), Fichte and Schelling. And from Schelling the line runs through Schopenhauer to Freud and modern depth psychology, and through Schopenhauer and Nietzsche to such thinkers as Bergson, Heidegger, Sartre, Whitehead and Hartshorne.

It is this tension between intellect and will, or reason and unreason, which we find at the heart of Schelling's philosophizing. Especially as a result of his acquaintance with Jacob Boehme and F. C. Oetinger (as early as 1803)[74] Schelling came to see in the divine life, as in human life, an ultimate conflict between the Logos - the creative principle of light, wisdom and truth, - and that contradictory element of will, the dark, demonic, destructive principle in God. As Tillich notes: "This tension makes the divine life not simply a sheer actuality (actus purus), as in Aristotle, but a dynamic process with the potentiality for conflict. In God this inner conflict is always victoriously overcome, but in creatures it breaks out destructively as well as creatively."[75]

Before Schelling produced his Philosophy of Nature, he was a philosopher of will. Now in his late philosophy (beginning clearly in his On Human Freedom, 1809), he again comes to understand Will as original being. In his Philosophical

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[74] Cf. F. de Wolfe Bolman, op. cit., p. 19f. Also, Kurt Leese, Von Jacob Boehme zu Schelling: zur Metaphysik des Gottesproblems, Erfurt, 1927.

[75] P. Tillich, Perspectives, p. 194

Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology, he writes:

> "The old proposition is here once again in place: the original being is will, and will is not merely the beginning but also the content of the first emergent being."[76]

Thus, Will is understood not merely as a psychological phenomenon but as "the universal driving dynamics of all life processes."[77] It is present in the physical realm as natural forces like gravitation, in plants as the life urge, in animals (including man) as instincts and drives, and in man as both conscious and unconscious will.

This dynamic element in all reality - in God and man - has both destructive and creative aspects. When the two aspects are united, we have creative spirit. As Marcel puts it, it is the joining together (enchainement) of knowledge (savoir) and freedom (liberté), i.e., will, which becomes the central motif of the Last Philosophy.[78] As we shall see, the ultimate form of religion is, for Schelling, "philosophical religion", and by this he means that free religion of the Spirit in which intellect (reason) and free will (or conscious affirmation) come together and are one.

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[76] W, V, 570

[77] Cf. J. Boehme, The Way to Christ (1624 and later editions) translated by J J Stoudt (Harper and Bros., 1947) pp. xxiiiff.

[78] G. Marcel, art. cit., p. 78

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III SOME THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

A. Indifference toward theological Orthodoxy

In his Philosophy of Revelation (Part III below) Schelling repeatedly insists that his purpose is to "explain" Christianity but that in attempting to do so he has not the slightest interest in whether he happens to be in agreement or disagreement with "Orthodoxy".

> "For me there is no question of having to agree with any Church doctrine. I have no interest in being orthodox, as it is called, as I would not find it difficult to be the opposite. For me Christianity is simply an appearance I am trying to explain."[79]

And again,

> "Perhaps the Philosophy of Revelation shall be reproached with being 'orthodox' (for this is usually regarded as a reproach). But it is not a matter of orthodoxy - I reject this because it would give Philosophy of Revelation an entirely false standpoint. In fact, the 'Dogmatic' which is set up or affirmed is of no concern to me whatsoever. It is not *my* task, it is not the task of the *philosopher*, to agree with anyone. My concern is to understand Christianity in all its characteristic distinctiveness. Of course, *we* are, through our philosophical ideas, in the position to understand Christianity a good deal more truly and at the same time more rationally than many a half-orthodox view, and even than the so-called pure rational views which resolve the *real* aspect of Christianity into nothing."[80]

This explanation of Christianity must be given, Schelling believes, in terms of a "higher history", for he is convinced that history is ruled by "higher causes". Behind all phenomena lie "higher laws" which are expressions of the divine will.

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[79] *W*, VI, p. 593

[80] *W*, VI, p. 472

> "Those who recognize nothing higher and nothing divine in history might even derive an event like the Reformation from the most unworthy causes. This reveals a beggarly self-interest. Once we commit ourselves to search for such causes, there will be scarcely a subject for which causes just as purely arbitrary and worthless cannot be found. But human affairs are not ruled by such arbitrary causes, and whatever instrumental and purely nominal causes might have contributed - indeed, with respect to the first foundation of Christianity, they are not to be excluded - the real causes lie not in this but in higher laws in terms of which the divine will prescribes every development."[81]

B. Attitude toward the Scriptures (Tautegorical interpretation)

Now this "explanation" of Christianity necessarily entails a true understanding of the New Testament. "The real meaning and significance of Christianity," says Schelling, "must be judged according to the authentic sources of Christianity."[82] And these authentic sources, the New Testament writings, have a special status since they are the products of the Apostolic Age.

The point to note here is that for Schelling the Apostolic or first century Church belongs to an age which is "before or outside of history." This first century church was "pre-historical" and represents "an age of innocence and potentiality", a state of "merely negative unity from which the church was bound to issue forth." (In Schelling's time this point of view had been forcefully set forth by J. A. W. Neander, 1789-1850)[83] Since the Apostolic Church was a supra-natural event, the canons of modern critical historiography cannot be applied to it.

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[81] _W_, VI, p. 706   [82] _W_, VI, p. 593. Schelling explains on p. 712: "Only from the three great apostles (Peter, Paul and John) are there unquestionably extant Christian sources, didactic writings, which show that the destiny of these three at the same time went on into the future and was not limited to their period, so that its effect was to extend to the last development of Christianity."

It follows, for Schelling, that the Apostolic writings are also supra-historical, with a content that completely escapes what we today would call Higher Criticism and Form Criticism. The historical-critical approach to the Scriptures tends to explain them away in empirical terms. Fundamentalist literalism, on the other hand, doesn't *explain* them at all! The way out is to adopt what Schelling calls "tautegorical" interpretation. Christianity, like every other significant phenomenon, *contains in itself the key to its own comprehension*. Hence the exegesis of Revelation, as of Mythology, is to be carried out in the most literal fashion, but in the context and terminology of pure rational philosophy which succeeds in bringing out the true meaning, "the hidden system". We must abide by "the perfectly literal meaning (*vollkommene Eigentlichkeit*) of the New Testament expressions", declares Schelling, and then we will have "explained Christianity purely in its own terms, just as we explained Mythology in its own terms."[84]

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[83] Cf. Klaus Penzel, "A Chapter in the History of the Ecumenical Quest", *Church History*, Vol. 33 (1964), p. 324. For Schelling's reference to Neander's *General History of the Christian Church*, See *W*, VI, p. 690n.

[84] *W*, VI, pp. 616 and 626. On the Tautegorical Interpretation of Mythology see *W*, VI, 198, or Pt. I, Ch. 4, below.

> "Just as I have taught you through the Philosophy of Mythology to see truth in Mythology understood literally or strictly (i.e., not taken allegorically), so I want to place you, through the Philosophy of Revelation, in a position to understand all expressions of Revelation in the most literal way, even more literally than is the case with many views that are regarded as orthodox, not to mention those that are half or fully rationalistic."[85]

> "If you really want to explain something, you must not begin by falsifying that which is to be explained in order to make the job easier."[86]

It would be a sad misunderstanding of Schelling's position if we supposed him to be simply ignorant of the aims, methods and achievements of the historical-critical scholars. At many points we can notice incidentally his awareness of the results of criticism.[87] And, of course, he himself had engaged in critical exercises - as witness his Master's Dissertation (already mentioned), written at age seventeen, which chose the Garden of Eden story (Genesis 3) as a concrete illustration of how a *myth* is born and how it becomes a common inheritance; or the fact that long before the advent of D. F. Strauss' *Life of Jesus*, Schelling had considered the "hypothesis of mythical interpretations of the life of Jesus."[88] The *reason* that Schelling, in his 1841 lectures, virtually ignores all the turbulent critical work of the years 1835-1841 - the work of men like F.C. Baur, W. Vatkes, D.F. Strauss, Ludwig Feuerbach - is simply that he was convinced it misses the point:

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[85] *W*, VI, 472f [86] *W*, VI, 593

[87] For example, Grotius view that the last chapter of John is a later addition (p. 723), the Synoptic "problem" (p. 718), Mark as the first Gospel (p. 439), Ecclesiastes as pseudepigraphical (p. 405), and many others. All in *W*, VI.

[88] See *The Philosophy of Revelation*, Lecture 33.

it does not "explain" Christianity!

On one occasion, however, Schelling did reply to the charge that he consistently makes use of the "canonical" scriptures "without critical-historical distinction."[89] He explains that he regards the New Testament scriptures "first and foremost as sources whose authors were filled with the Spirit of Christianity and in which are to be recognized inspirations of the Christian Spirit." Who the author was, is of no consequence. What he wrote as inspired is what matters. Hence, when "critics" point out the uncertain authenticity of a New Testament book (e.g., II Peter) or even of all New Testament books, Schelling can indicate the irrelevance of this consideration for his view in the following way:

> "This certainty about authorship has importance only for that dogmatic method which does not regard the chief theses of Christian teaching as true for its own sake, but which looks upon these teachings as true merely because and insofar as they are in books which have come to be looked upon as apostolic and inspired by God. We have never - at least, never explicitly - dealt with the question of the theopneustia (divine inspiration) of the New Testament books, for we do not regard a particular doctrine as true because it occurs in those writings but, quite the reverse, as true because we recognize it as true, i.e., as necessary, in that great context in terms of which Christianity is to be comprehended. This is the reason we regard those books as authentic and inspired by the Spirit of Christianity, and only in this sense have we appealed to them."[90]

It is therefore the content of a given writing, and not its external witnesses, that makes it Christian and, in particular, apostolic. "A true critique of the New Testament means, therefore, something more than mere external erudition and a facile play with unhistorical possibilities." The "greatest proof of the authenticity" of the Apostolic writings is precisely the "great contrast" between them and the first post-Apostolic writings. For whoever wrote these Canonical books - even if a post-apostolic man were responsible! - it makes "no difference at all from our standpoint," for in the nature of the case "criticism" or "critical questions" will never "establish that understanding which is capable of giving us a true clue to a right criticism and a reliable, positive foundation."[91] The all-important thing is to understand the inner (higher) meaning of the scriptures.

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[89] W, VI, pp. 710-712

[90] W, VI, 710

Kuno Fischer fulminates against Schelling's view, believing him to be completely undone by the results of historical criticism.[92] He believes that Schelling, who in his Philosophy of Art was critical enough to say: "Christ is a historical person whose biography was written before his birth," is now, in his Berlin period, quite inconsistent in ignoring the historical-critical approach in favor of an allegorical-mystical interpretation of Scripture. But Schelling's view of Revelation as knowledge given to the apostles under special circumstances - a knowledge which must be distinguished from that truth into which the Holy Spirit will lead us, and which is not Revelation at all but truly human knowledge - may well represent an important insight into the function of the New Testament in Christianity as a living religion. In any case, when Schelling says the Scriptures were "inspired", he means precisely that there were "higher causes" at work, and concedes the possibility that the scripture-authors did not necessarily understand their own work. For example, in discussing the meaning of Mt 1:20, Schelling can say:

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[91] W, VI, 711 [92] K. Fischer, op. cit., pp. 710-715

> "I will not contend that the author of the gospel intended the expression to mean exactly what we understand it to mean. This is quite unnecessary. In many cases we see the evangelists innocently writing down something without seeing all the implications or personally taking in the whole meaning. It partly resembles the situation in Mythology where consciousness gave expression to things whose meaning it did not take in or control. The concept of Inspiration is to be held on to especially in this sense."[93]

Finally, Schelling is ready to admit the presence of "epic embroidery", "mythological elaboration", "subjective interpretation", and "historical conditioning" in the Scriptures. But he insists that the Subject of Revelation is not endangered thereby.

> "Everywhere and at all times in the New Testament, one must distinguish the Subject (die Sache) and the way of understanding the same (Auffassungsweise). The latter is determined by the time as well as by the interpreting concepts. The Subject is older than any presentation of it. The former remains objective even though one concedes something subjective in the latter."[94]

To see how Schelling executes this tautegorical exegesis of Scripture, one should consult most of Part III below. Admittedly, there are numerous occasions when one wonders if exegesis has ceased and eisegesis taken over,[95] but Schelling does not himself think he is *imposing* a system on the Scriptures. He believes he is eliciting, making explicit, that hidden "system" which is "everywhere presupposed but nowhere completely expressed" in the New Testament.[96]

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[93] W, VI, 569 (Cf. Socrates on the poets in the Apology)

[94] W, VI, 570

C. Theology as Theogony is Ontology

Although for some it will appear as a *hybris* worse than Hegel's, the fact is that Schelling is actually attempting to write a Life of God. God is not a system but a life. He is born; He comes to be. Reality does not simply have a structure, it has a history; it is not an object but an event; it is not static but dynamic; it is not immobility but process. The history of God is the history of being itself. World, man, Father, Son, Devil, Spirit - all are ultimately moments in the divine life. But Schelling is not a pantheist! He is categorically opposed to all pantheistic or emanationist interpretations of God: "God is already Lord of the world before the world, i.e., when it is up to him to posit himself or not." "God is not God by virtue of his real relation to the world but by virtue of his possible relation."[97]

Schelling is a Monotheist who can posit plurality in the Godhead. Ueberweg has a neat summary:

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[95] For example, in *W*, VI, the interpretation of I Peter 3:18f (p. 600), of Elijah (p. 695), of the Caesarea Philippi episode (p. 703), of Jude 6 (p. 681) and of II Peter 2:4 (p. 680) to cite just a few interesting cases.

[96] *W*, VI, p. 425

[97] Marcel, *art. cit.*, p. 79

> "Schelling distinguishes in God (a) blindly necessary or unpremeditating being; (b) the three potencies of the divine essence: unconscious will, the *causa materialis* of creation; conscious, considering will, the *causa efficiens*; and the union of the both, or the *causa finalis*, *secundum quam omnia fiunt*; and (c) the three persons who proceed from the three potencies. These persons are the Father, as the absolute possibility of overcoming; the Son, as the overcoming power; and the Spirit, as completion of the overcoming. In Nature work only potencies; in man, personalities."[98]

Schelling has an analysis of the true meaning of Monotheism in his book of that name (Book I of *The Philosophy of Mythology*, *W*, VI, pp. 255-357 - not included in the present volume). His analysis is in two parts: (i) the *Conceptual* Being of God, which sees God as the One who is able to be in three forms or moments (as Power to be, as pure Being, and as Spirit or "the power of Being to posit itself as such"); (ii) the *Actual* Being of God, in which the divine Will separates the potencies, placing them in tension, thus giving rise to a Theogonic process which is also a Process of Creation (the Potencies being Causes). The End of Creation (i.e., of the Theogonic process) is *God-positing human consciousness*, a conclusion identical with the conclusion reached in the Historical-Critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology (Part I below).

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The relations between the persons in the Godhead is dealt with in detail in Part III below. It is enough to note here that in the Creation, "the Son is not outside the Father, not a personality acting independently," but in Salvation He

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[98] F. Ueberweg, *op. cit.*, p. 225

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is outside the Father, and does act independently - "even though in other respects He is the Father himself, the Father posited outside himself in a second personality ('He who sees me, sees the Father')." Hence Paul can say: "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself" (2 Cor. 5:19).[99] In the phrase "God reconciled the world to Himself through Christ", the word "through" has much greater mediative significance than it has in the phrase "God created the world through the Son."

> "You see how the relation returns here greatly enhanced, by virtue of which the Father emerged in the creation directly as B, but His true will lay in the Son, and through the latter he overcame the same being which he as Father posited and affirmed. The same God who, as merely Father of the world (i.e., of the being which was faithless to him) was absolutely irreconcilable, now, as Son, reconciled this very being, and in this mediation is restored the highest unity of God with Himself - a unity which was destroyed by the perfidy of man.
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> "It requires a certain courage of the mind to hold fast this relation with one's whole strength, just as it requires a confidence of the heart to appropriate it."[100]

And again,

> "The Subject reveals Himself as the true Son, hence as the Father, only in the Incarnation.... This is the remarkable end of that history of the beginning of things, indeed of Being itself.... To all who received him, he gave power to become children of God.... Now the divine birth, broken by the Fall, is restored in those who believe."[101]

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[99] W, VI, 479 [100] Ibid.

[101] W, VI, 509f.

D. Christology

Schelling, reflecting the interests of his time, sees Christology, i.e., the doctrine of the Person rather than the Work of Christ, as crucial for Christian Theology. Christ and Satan are neither created nor are they eternal principles. They are potencies of being "posited from eternity". They are aspects of the divine economy, necessary to the divine life and to the process of creation.

"The New Testament view," says Schelling, "is that Christ pre-existed."[102] It might be objected that in a number of places (including the Synoptic Gospels) the New Testament seems to think otherwise. Schelling, however, does not recognize any diversity of New Testament Christologies. He treats even those passages that seem to some to support Adoptionist views as consistent with his Incarnationism.[103] His discussion is in terms of Pauline Kenoticism and Johannine Logos Christology.

In Germany in the mid-third of the Nineteenth Century, as Claude Welch has pointed out, the Christological question was examined in a metaphysical or "objective" way. Mr Welch has given us examples of the three major types of German theology during those years, viz., the "Neo-Lutheranism" of Gottfried Thomasius, the "Mediating theology" of Isaak August Dorner, and the "speculative theology" of Alois Emanuel

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[102] W, VI, 427

[103] E.g., Acts 2:36 (W, VI, 466), and Mark 1:11, the Baptism of Jesus where, says Schelling, "Christ becomes the Son." (W, VI, 475).

Biedermann. All three, says Welch, focussed on a common problem: "the being of God in Christ, or more explicitly, the doctrine of the incarnation in relation to the concept of God."[104] Of these three men, Dorner, especially, acknowledged his indebtedness to Schelling,[105] but Dorner also saw clearly that Kenoticism, for better or worse, was being superceded. In Welch's words:

> "Albrecht Ritschl was the new representative man, the one who tried to accomplish what the new theology most deeply wanted accomplished, viz., a cutting loose from the spirit of 'speculation', and even from the metaphysical in theology, and a turning to the 'practical' as a new foundation and form for theology. All the mid-nineteenth century's powerful systems for uniting the dogmatic and the philosophical were to be left behind. Thus also the Christological question as an 'objective' or 'metaphysical' matter was to be given up in favor of other modes of posing the question of Christ, restricted to 'historical' or 'value' or 'existential' judgments.
>
> "Whether in this, or in the larger turn away from the 'objective', the new theology was an advance or a retreat, whether it more fruitfully met or merely evaded the questions put to theology in the nineteenth century, is another kind of question...."[106]

Schelling's understanding of Christ, however, is profoundly influenced by that Father of Protestant Mysticism, Jacob Boehme. Boehme's "Way to Christ", writes J. J. Stoudt, is really "the search for the Logos of being that lies deeply embedded in the life of faith." It is a quest which man must attempt freely and alone, and one to which he is driven by the threat of meaninglessness and "the terrible abyss of human despair."

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[104] Claude Welch (Editor and Translator), God and Incarnation in Mid-Nineteenth Century German Theology, (New York, 1965), p. 4

[105] C. Welch, op. cit., pp. 13, 140n [106] Ibid., p. 17f

> "The way to Christ, i.e., the search for essential being hidden within existence, may lead either to the symbolical realization of an historical event, or to the affirmation of existence through and by means of a regenerative life,... a new world or a new birth.
>
> "In either event paradox appears. Essential being is discovered as manifesting itself within existence without the loss of its essential or ideal character. Jesus is the Christ of God incarnate! In this Christ - the Logos of God - there is never dialectic, but merely paradox, and man's search for the way to Christ, for the Logos of being manifesting iself within and under the conditions of existence, is pre-eminently paradox. Only the pure in heart see God."[107]

As with Boehme, so with Schelling.

E. Theological and Religious Roots

Schelling is a man of great erudition, and the more one reads him, the less confident one becomes about indicating where Schelling may initially have received his particular inspirations. Schelling has steeped himself in the whole philosophical tradition, Greek, Medieval and Modern; in Old and New Testament literature; in the writings of the Church Fathers; in ideas of Medieval and Reformation thinkers; and in the literature of German mysticism and of Swabian Pietism. He is acquainted with Hebrew, Greek, Latin and other languages, with Philology, and with the developing field of History of Religions. Here we shall draw attention to the relatively unfamiliar fact of Schelling's relation to the traditions of German Mysticism, Swabian theosophy and pietism, and Christian eschatology.

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[107] J. J. Stoudt (Tr.), Jacob Boehme, The Way to Christ (Harper and Bros., 1947), pp. xiiif.

German Idealism may be viewed as a speculative revival of the Philosophy of Religion and Philosophy of Nature of German Mysticism (e.g., Ekhart and Boehme). Ernst Benz has drawn attention to the numerous thinkers who see a strict relation between the Philosophy of German Idealism and Mysticism - such writers as Vischer, Martenson, Pfeiffer, Dilthey, Maier and Heimsoeth. For example:

> "The aesthetician, F. T. Vischer, one of the most important disciples of Hegel, explained: 'It has been forgotten that the new philosophy went to school with the old mystics, namely with Jacob Boehme.' Similarly, the Hegel scholar Martenson, 1842, stressed the fact that German Mysticism is 'the first form in which German philosophy stepped into history'.... Franz Pfeiffer, who became known through the edition of the German works of Meister Ekhart, wrote even more emphatically (1845): 'The German mystics are the patriarchs of German speculation. In them lies the beginnings of an independent German philosophy; indeed, the fundamental principles on which, centuries later, famous systems were built, are found therein not merely in germ but to some extent already well articulated.'"[108]

On the other hand, idealistic philosophy is rooted also in Swabian Pietism. Schelling can claim a spiritual heritage that includes the great Johann Albrecht Bengel (1687-1752), Philipp Matthäus Hahn and Hofacker Friedrich Christoph Oetinger. Here is the same speculative impulse, says Benz, the same striving toward a religious total-view and a higher unity of Reason and Revelation, the same desire to make faith visible.[109]

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[108] E. Benz, Schelling, Werden und Wirken seines Denkens (Zürich, 1955), p. 8

[109] Ibid., pp 8-10

There is also, however, a new and thoroughly unmystical element which comes out of the theological heritage to assume a directive role in German Idealism. It is what Benz describes as "a peculiar eschatological bias, a characteristic orientation toward History, the attempt to unravel the meaning of Being by way of an understanding of History."[110]

> "This understanding of History, however, does not restrict itself to an interpretation of the past and the present, but has a prophetic endzeitlichen drive. It revolves around the idea of the fulfilment of time, the end of History; and Schelling, as well as Hegel and Franz von Baader, make no effort to hide the theological context behind this way of putting the question. On the contrary, they use in their metaphysics of history the vocabulary of the Christian expectation of the end-time since they speak of the 'Kingdom of God', the 'fulfilment of time', the 'judgment of the world', and the 'end-time'."[111]

F. Spiritual Evolution

The above influences contribute to the dynamic metaphysics and the evolutionary theological viewpoint of the late Schelling. The root metaphor of Schelling's whole metaphysical construction may be seen as a biological-psychological-social one: that of the development of the self from natural unconscious will to free, self-conscious spirit. As early as the System of Transcendental Idealism, Schelling could speak of history as the gradual and continuing self-revelation of the Absolute, and believed that "man has, through his history, a constant proof of the being

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[110] *Ibid.*, p. 31 [111] *Ibid.*

(Dasein) of God, a proof which can be completed, however, only by the whole of history."[112]

The description of Schelling's philosophy after 1812 as "evolutionary theology," will be familiar to readers of A. O. Lovejoy's Great Chain of Being.[113] Lovejoy sees Schelling's mature philosophy as the first in the Western tradition to make a complete break with the static "devolutionary" metaphysics stemming from Plato and Plotinus. In this respect, observes Paul Hayner, Schelling's philosophy represents an important link in the process by which evolutionary conceptions became established in the natural and social sciences in the nineteenth century.[114]

The present volume illustrates the way in which such "evolutionary ontology" may be employed to illuminate the religious history of mankind. Human history is seen as but one aspect of the larger whole of the process which the universe itself undergoes. "While man and his history are now placed in the center of the universe," writes Hayner, "the universe itself is to be understood as a history which can be fully understood only from the point of view of the Christian drama of salvation."[115] Schelling's speculative metaphysics is "verified" by appeal to the "facts" of the mythological and religious traditions of mankind. Hence his philosophy emerges as a "metaphysical empiricism," a method

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[112] Ibid.

[113] Cambridge, 1936. p. 323. It is Schelling's Reply to Jacobi, of 1812, which is the decisive document.

[114] P. C. Hayner, Reason and Existence, (Leiden, 1967), p. vii.

[115] Ibid., p. ix.

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for dealing adequately with the fundamentally "historical" character of reality.

In this connection, Ernst Benz's recent book, Evolution and Christian Hope, ties Schelling into a tradition that stretches back to Christian beginnings, and may be traced through the 12th century abbot, Joachim of Fiore, and the 17th and 18th century Christian Theosophists; through Schelling and Franz von Baader; and on into late nineteenth and twentieth century thinkers such as Karl Beth, Edgar Dacqué, Leopold Ziegler and Teilhard de Chardin.

Joachim of Fiore (1132-1202), for example, created the expectation of Johannine Christianity as the last and highest form of Christianity in the history of salvation, and joined the ideas of progress and development with the prophecy of the imminent fulfilment of the history of salvation to create "the model for the religious, social, political and philosophical utopias of modern times."[116] F. C. Oetinger, in his Theologia ex idea vitae deducta (1765), sketched the history of salvation as a history of the total development of life through all its stages, and saw the goal and terminal point in the development of the universe as its transformation into human shape, namely, that of Christ.[117] Jacob Boehme, from whom Oetinger drew his real inspiration, "expressed the basic idea of Christian anthropology more clearly than Teilhard de Chardin, the idea of 'man being struck by the image of Christ.' When Adam turned away from God, he was 'struck' by the image of Christ in the very moment of his estrangement." (Boehme cited Eph. 1:4).

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[116] E. Benz, Evolution and Christian Hope, Tr. by H. G. Frank. Doubleday and Co., New York, 1966. Pp. 35-48.

[117] Ibid., pp. 168-170. See Benz for a discussion of Beth (173-176), Dacqué (177-182), Ziegler (182-187).

> "Adam is never left to himself. The image of Christ was given to him as a model which accompanied him through all the phases of the development of human consciousness, as the aim into which he should be molded and transformed. This aim was at first promise. But then, after its fulfilment through Jesus Christ, it became a force of transformation, an 'inauguration' of a new form of existence, an element of the progressive incorporation of pious humanity into the body of Christ, the beginning of a progressive permeation of humanity with resurrection as the new form of existence, a transformation of humanity and thereby of the universe into the corporeal form of the Spirit."[118]

That Schelling stands in this line of development is abundantly clear in Part III below. Furthermore, as Benz notes, Schelling sought, as early as The Ages of the World, "a combination of scientific knowledge of the physical world with that of the spiritual world." This search, along with his "evolutionism" places Schelling in a tradition that may be traced straight to Teilhard de Chardin in our own day.[119] Benz summarizes:

> "In the century since Schelling's death, the idea of evolution in its manifold interpretations has eventually prevailed after it was repeatedly examined, confirmed and rejected... It is impossible for a Christian understanding of the world, of the history of mankind and of the universe, to ignore (scientific) knowledge. In the long run, a presentation of the truth of the Christian faith cannot be based on a form of interpretation that has lost its live connection with present knowledge about the world... Schelling had a presentiment of this new task."[120]

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[118] Ibid., p. 170 [119] Ibid., p. 172 [120] Ibid.

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In our day, Teilhard de Chardin's works have revived interest in this whole tradition. Although Teilhard stands completely outside the traditions of German philosophical and spiritual history (its works were unknown to him), there are similarities of theme and purpose. Writes Benz:

> "Teilhard de Chardin's ideas are reminiscent of many ideas and terms of seventeenth and eighteenth century Christian theosophy and of the Christian religious philosophy of Schelling and Franz von Baader.... The most important elements of Teilhard's ideas are connected with the mainstream of the Swabian spiritual heritage, namely, with Friedrich Christoph Oetinger (1707-1782), the Father of Swabian Christian theosophy, with his great predecessor, Jacob Boehme (1574-1624) and with his greatest disciple and successor, Friedrich Wilhelm Schelling."[121]

Both Schelling and Teilhard de Chardin attempted a theology which would integrate the Christian understanding of the history of salvation into the total movement of evolution. This means for Teilhard, says Benz, that "the history of salvation is extended to the total development of human life and, indeed, of the universe. The evolution of life culminates in man, who is the real axis of evolution", hence this view represents "a reversal of the interpretation of man given by many materialistic disciples of Darwin."[122] For Teilhard, "advancing into consciousness" means advancing into the sphere of freedom. Like Schelling, but unlike Hegel, Teilhard develops a philosophy which "flows into a philosophy of Freedom."[123]

In his criticism of Teilhard, Benz raises an important issue that might well be kept in mind in considering Schelling's view of time and history. He writes:

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[121] Ibid., p. 168 [122] Ibid., p. 215 [123] Ibid., p. 228

> "Under the influence of the stretching into periods of aeons, the original spiritual and moral impulse of the Christian expectation of the end of time fades out. The idea that all lines of evolution converge in point Omega, leads, without fail, to the idea of Universal Redemption. Humanity thus absorbs the Church, and the final judgment becomes identical with the selection process of evolution in which much is sacrificed and eliminated. For its creator this theology may still be filled with ethical impulses. But its popularization cannot avoid a danger to which the supporters of universal redemption were exposed since the days of Origen: the dangerous feeling of security and the consciousness of being well taken care of in that stream of convergence which runs irresistibly toward its Omega."[124]

G. Christianity and the Non-Christian Religions

Schelling stresses the uniqueness of Christianity, of course, but at the same time he insists on the fact of its continuity with all other religions. Jesus Christ is unique, and Christianity is the highest religion, and yet Christianity is the same kind of thing as all other religions.[125] Christ was present - though not *as* Christ - in "Paganism," i.e., the pre-Christian religions, and Paganism is the vast background for Christianity, finding its final truth and fulfilment there.

There is no question about the fact that Schelling holds Christ to be active in Paganism *before* the Incarnation in Jesus. He calls Christ "the pagan light," "the true potency of Paganism." But it is not clear that Christ continues to be active in Paganism, i.e., in the world's religions, after his earthly incarnation. On the one hand,

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[124] *Ibid*., pp. 229f [125] See Introd. to Part II below.

Schelling can say: "in his death Christ died as this cosmic potency" (W. VI, pp 473f), and can declare present-day "Paganism" to be dead and withered. On the other hand, he declares that Christ is eternally the Mediator and Reconciler: "He took on himself all our sins and in this way became eternal reconciler." (W. VI, pp. 468, 473) To be sure, the death of Christ means His death as a "natural potency" and at the same time his transformation into a free personality. But He is present as free personality only in Christianity.

Has Schelling here made Christ the victim of a temporal succession? Should he have stressed explicitly that these functions of the divine - "natural potency" and "free reconciling personality" - have no temporal order in the Godhead and are both eternal, so that God as Mediative and Reconciling could be openly acknowledged as present both naturally and freely in all the world's religions, including Christianity? Does Schelling's theology reflect a nineteenth century Christian imperialism for which we must make appropriate allowance?

A Note on Who Should Read Schelling

"Who should read Schelling?" and "How should Schelling be read?" have seemed to me to be questions not without some point. For Schelling is trying to make Mythology and Revelation intelligible in religious terms. He is after an explanation of Christianity in terms of a "higher history". And the fortunes of his search may have genuine appeal only to those who, like Schelling himself, have been smitten with "ontological wonder-sickness" - Why anything? Why not Nothing? Why Reason? Why not Unreason? - and who possess an urge to intellectual adventure that is not easily turned aside.

The reader who plunges too cheerfully into the "labyrinth" (Zeltner) or the impenetrable "jungle" (Pfleiderer, Marcel) of Schelling's philosophical investigations, may be prepared one way or the other by our philosopher's frank admonition:

> "This is a long road which lies ahead of us, and I say this deliberately so that those who are minded to follow us may arm themselves ahead of time with the necessary strength and endurance, and so that those who are unwilling or unable to follow us may remain right where they are. For as in life, so in Science, there are cowardly decisions as well as valorous ones. And in any difficult climb, those who are lacking in breath and courage stop exhausted half-way."[126]

This road is not for everyone. Schelling recognizes, of course, that there are many who do not want any "explanation" of this kind. There are, for example, those who say: "one should simply be satisfied with the grace of Christ, profit by it, and for the rest, inquire no further."[127] Well and good. If they are "satisfied with such a subjective Christianity", says Schelling, "no one has a right to say anything against them."[128] But surely, he hopes, such persons will, in their turn, concede freedom of inquiry to those who are "so constituted that for them knowledge and understanding go beyond everything," and who have "no heart for an uncomprehended grace." Such "scientific understanding", insists Schelling, is what will eventually unite even the most differently constituted of men.[129]

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[126] W, V, p. 451 [127] W, VI, p. 626

[128] Cf. Tillich's Dynamics of Faith, (New York, 1957) p. 52

The three-part presentation of Schelling's work that now follows, abounds in curious, interesting and original ideas. For some who read it, Father Copleston's mature and genial counsel will seem appropriate. He writes:

> "It is not so much a question of looking to Schelling for solutions to problems as of finding stimulus and inspiration in his thought, points of departure for independent reflection. And possibly this is a characteristic of Schelling's philosophizing as a whole. Its value may be primarily suggestive and stimulative. But it can, of course, exercise this function only for those who have a certain initial sympathy with his mentality and an appreciation of the problems which he raised. In the absence of this sympathy and appreciation there is a natural tendency to write him off as a poet who chose the wrong medium for the expression of his vision of the world."[130]

In the present writer's view, the most responsible and trenchant criticism of Schelling's metaphysics is provided by Emil Fackenheim in the two articles already mentioned.[131] A discussion of these and other criticisms, however, shall be reserved for the section of final evaluative comments. Summaries and explanatory notes will be found in the Introductions to Parts II and III below, and in the two Appendices.

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[129] W, VI, p. 626

[130] The reference may be to Rudolph Carnap's suggestion that Metaphysics, as the expression of one's general basic attitude toward life (Lebenseinstellung, Lebensgefühl), is most adequately expressed not by writing a metaphysical system but by producing a work of art. Metaphysicians, he thought, were "musicians without musical ability." (See Erkenntnis, Vol. II, 1932).

Some, meanwhile, will want to read Schelling not, initially, to argue with him but to enjoy him. Others, not merely intellectually curious, may share his profound struggle with the problems of existence and its intelligibility, of faith and reason, with their own existential concern. And all who, in Marcel's words, see philosophy as "a heroic adventure, full of risks and skirting unfathomable depths," will find Schelling "always an exciting companion and even, perhaps, an inspiration."[132] For past philosophic systems, insists Bolman, are "more than outmoded curios." They are, in fact, "fundamental ways in which man recurrently tries to establish the intelligibility of the world of nature and history in which he lives."[133]

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[131] Viz., E. Fackenheim, "Schelling's Philosophy of Religion", University of Toronto Quarterly, Vol. XXII, No. 1 (Oct. 1952); and "Schelling's Conception of Positive Philosophy", Review of Metaphysics, Vol. VII, No. 4 (June, 1954)

[132] G. Marcel, art. cit., p. 87

[133] F. de W. Bolman, op. cit., p. 8

PART I

PHILOSOPHY AND MYTHOLOGY

A Summary-Translation of the
Historical-Critical Introduction to
the Philosophy of Mythology

Münchner Jubiläumsdruck of Schellings Werke,
edited by Manfred Schröter (1959),
Vol. VI, pp. 1-254.

INTRODUCTION

a. Can there be a Philosophy of Mythology?

Schelling begins his Historical-Critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology by questioning the very possibility of such a science. At first glance, he admits, nothing seems more incongruous than the coupling together of these two terms, philosophy and mythology. Philosophy is involvement in the rational search for truth. But mythology seems nothing but a hodge-podge of arbitrary and fanciful fables, so opposed to all ordinary rational and scientific notions as to be an unworthy object for any kind of serious study, least of all a philosophical examination.[1]

This very opposition, however, is precisely what excites Schelling's interest. He feels challenged "to discover reason in what appears irrational, a meaning in what appears meaningless."[2] The very disparity between philosophy and mythology becomes the reason for attempting their reconciliation. The fact that Schelling sees it this way may be due, in part, to the spirit of the times in which he lived, for he describes his age as one in which "science does not hesitate to reconcile the most remote things," and hails the appearance in his day of an unprecedented and widespread feeling for "the inner unity and affinity of all the sciences"[3].

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[1] p. 222f. All page references in Part I, unless otherwise noted, are to Schelling's "Historical-Critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology" as found in the Münchner Jubiläumsdruck of Schellings Werke, edited by Manfred Schröter (1959), Vol.VI, pp. 1-254.

[2] p. 222

In fact, the new mood in the academic circles of his time made it unnecessary for Schelling to apologise for the novelty of his undertaking. There is, he says, a "commendable freedom" which reigns in German universities. It encourages inquiry into new areas, welcomes new subject-matter, espouses new methods of inquiry and instruction, and thus "permits the development of the scientific spirit not only in breadth and richness but also in depth". This new method of inquiry and instruction repudiates subjectivity and indoctrination and refuses "to initiate students into results already obtained without showing them how the results have been reached"[4]. It insists on making the subject matter "uncover and reveal itself". The ten lectures of Schelling's Historical-Critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology are, in fact, a good example of the new method and Schelling's words apply to his own case: "in the teaching of a new science, the student is made a witness of its very birth. He is shown how the mind gets hold of and masters this new subject, and is then invited, rather than required, to place himself in a position to receive the new knowledge"[5].

Preliminary objections to a philosophy of mythology are thus easily turned aside by Schelling. The novelty, practical difficulty and seemingly incongruous nature of the undertaking obviously do not count against its legitimacy. But perhaps the whole proposal is too pretentious! Cannot the adequate explanation of Mythology be found in something far simpler than a "Philosophy" of Mythology? The very title, by bringing to mind analogous ones, like "Philosophy of Language" and "Philosophy of Nature", seems to assign Mythology a place "which hitherto has not seemed justified"[6]. There is a light-hearted comment on this difficulty in a later lecture:

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[3] pp.6,7 [4] p.5 [5] p.5f

> "No sooner was the idea of a 'Philosophy of Mythology' formulated than we were obliged to recognise its problematic character, in other words, to recognise that it was itself in need of justification. To be sure, everyone is free to bring the word 'philosophy' into association with any subject whatever simply by having the word followed by an appropriate genetive. There are, perhaps, many countries in which one could speak of the 'Philosophy of the Art of Cooking' without causing astonishment to a single soul. And we ourselves in Germany, in years gone by, received from some magnificently athletic official a 'Philosophy of Postal Affairs' in which postal matters were treated on the basis of the Kantian categories! A work by the well-known Fourcroy, quite meritorious for its time, bore the title 'Philosophy of Chemistry', but there was nothing characteristically philosophical about it unless one wishes to assume that elegance of development and logical exposition are peculiarly philosophical.
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> But thanks to the concepts 'Philosophy of Nature', 'Philosophy of History', 'Philosophy of Art', we Germans find ourselves in possession of a criterion which enables us to judge the significance of these associations of the word 'philosophy' with some genetive or other. We are careful not to resort to such a practice if its purpose is simply to express

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[6] p.6f.

> the fact that clarity and method characterise the investigation, or if there has been a desire to put forward merely general philosophical thoughts about a given subject. We avoid using the word 'philosophy' in such cases, firstly, because clarity and systematic method are qualities that can be required of all research and, secondly, because there is surely not an object in all the world which is incapable of suggesting philosophical ideas."[7]

An affirmative answer to our question, however, cannot be dogmatically presupposed. Whether a Philosophy of Mythology represents a scientific possibility or mere improper association of words can be known only at the end of the proposed inquiry. Schelling does not yet spell out his definition of philosophy - although it is obvious that for him it is much more than logical or linguistic analysis. He does, however, attempt to define the term "mythology".

b. What is meant by "Mythology"?

For the Greeks, as Schelling reminds us, the word "mythology" served to designate the entire assemblage of "their legends and stories which go back in general beyond historical times", plus the poetic inventions which constitute later elaborations.[8] But behind the poetic elaborations and prior to the earliest mythological tales, there is what Schelling calls "the world of gods" (_die Götterwelt_) which constitutes the original material of mythology, the kernel around which all else is crystallised. This _Götterwelt_ is filled with events which belong to an order of things quite different from the historical and human orders. It is "a realm where heroes are gods, that is to say, a seemingly indeterminate multitude of piously venerated personalities who form a world of their own. This world is connected in numerous ways with the common order of things and of human existence, and yet is essentially separate and possessed of an independent existence". Granted the multiplicity of these religiously revered beings, Mythology may be called Polytheism, and mythological science reduced to investigations bearing on the nature of the gods (Götterlehre)[9].

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[7] pp.219f

[8] p.8

Mythology, however, is concerned not only with the theory or nature of the gods (Götterlehre) but with the history of the Gods (Göttergeschichte) as well, for these mythological beings have, from the very beginning, certain natural and historical relations with one another. "When Cronos is called a son of Ouranos, this is a natural relation; and when he castrates his father and ousts him from his position as ruler of the world, this is a historical relation". And "since natural relations are also, in the widest sense, historical ones", Schelling will use the latter term to include the former. It is not the case that the gods have some prior abstract existence outside of these historical relations. They are "by nature" historical. Hence, "the full and complete concept of Mythology is not merely theory of the gods, but history of the gods or, as the Greeks say, Theogony (though this term emphasises only the natural relations)"[10].

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[9] p.9

Schelling distinguishes his inquiry from that "science of myths" in which there is concern only with myths "which arise when a historical fact is associated with a divinity" but in which no reference is made to the primary fact, which is the history of the gods. He illustrates the point in his comment[11] on K. Ottfried Müller's book, Prolegomena to a Scientific Mythology (1825). Attention is drawn to Müller's discussion of the pestilence mentioned in the first book of the Iliad.

> "Agamemnon, as you know, inflicted an outrage upon the priest of Apollo, and when this priest besought the god to avenge him, Apollo immediately responded by letting loose this plague on the Greeks. The facts in the story are simple: the daughter of a priest of Apollo was demanded back - in vain - by her father. The father was contemptuously rebuffed by Agamemnon. And at this point the pestilence broke out. But, declares Müller, as soon as these facts had been accepted as correct, 'all those who were convinced of Apollo's avenging and punitive power' immediately, spontaneously and with complete accord, assumed a relationship of cause and effect between the insult and the pestilence. They believed, in other words, that Apollo had sent the pestilence at the request of his priest (who had been outraged by the refusal to return his daughter), and they each affirmed this connection with conviction, speaking of it as if it were a fact they had witnessed with their own eyes."[12]

The Philosophy of Mythology, says Schelling, is "not

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[10] p. 9

[11] pp. 201-204 Cf. 225

[12] p. 203

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at all concerned with the question of how such stories, derived from mythology, came to be formed". Müller does not address himself to the enigmatic aspect of mythology, that is, he does not explain how men came in the first place to believe in the existence of an Apollo with his avenging and punitive power. Hence he is not discussing the proper content of mythology at all and "the story which he cites is no more part of mythology than the story of the Legio fulminatrix and other analogous tales are part of Christian doctrine".

> "Where the question of the essential meaning of Christianity is under discussion, should we speak only of the legends and merely try to explain how they originated? Naturally, 'from the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks', so it is understandable that once men were filled with ideas about the gods, they projected these ideas into every circumstance and into all their stories. It was in this way that myths, as O. Müller understands them, came to be formed without prior agreement and without deliberate intent, but by virtue of a kind of necessity."[13]

Schelling later confesses that possible misunderstanding could have been avoided if he had spoken of "a philosophy of the mythic world or something of the kind".[14] We must bear in mind, then, that Schelling is using the word "mythology" in the objective sense to designate the mythological representations as a whole viewed dynamically as a history of the gods (or theogony). The Philosophy of Mythology then becomes an inquiry into the true nature of this "singular ensemble of human representations", the world's

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[13] pp. 203f

[14] p. 225

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great polytheisms, and the world of the gods which constitutes its original material.[15]

c. How shall the inquiry proceed?

Schelling intends to review, one by one, every actual or possible explanation of the origin and nature of mythology. If he can successively demonstrate the untenability or inadequacy of every other view, his own approach - expressed in the title 'Philosophy of Mythology' - will be revealed as "the only possible one," and this, he believes, will imply its necessity and truth.[16] His procedure, then, will be a negative one, as far as this Historical-Critical Introduction is concerned. (The positive demonstration will be presented in the Philosophy of Mythology itself). It will set out from "the first possible viewpoint" and "ascend" through ever more adequate explanations until "all further ascension is impossible" and the necessarily true interpretation is established.

This procedure will also mean "going through every phase of a philosophical investigation of mythology," for a philosophical investigation goes beyond the existence of mythology and inquires into its nature and essence. A purely learned, empirical, historical inquiry can seek to establish the facts of mythology and do so by examining every kind of historical evidence (temples, works of art, writings, historically attested social customs,. and the mythologies themselves). The Philosophy of Mythology, however, must presuppose and go beyond this factual knowledge of the world's mythologies, and look always for general agreement, a common element, some insight into the nature of the whole. By reviewing all possible interpretations of mythology, every aspect of the subject is presented until at the end we shall really know what mythology is.[17]

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[16] pp. 7, 10. (This procedure, of course, raises several questions: (a) Can Schelling be sure his enumeration of possible explanations is exhaustive? (b) Has he definitively rejected all alternative views? (c) Does he consider the possibility of a plurality of explanations?)

Views of mythology's meaning are necessarily related to explanations of its origin. For example, Schelling invites us to imagine someone listening for the first time in his life to mythological tales. Doubtless the poor fellow would be thoroughly bewildered. "How am I to understand this?" he would ask. "What does it mean? How did such ideas arise?" But his questions pass over into one another and are really one. "The first question reveals our hearer's anxiety to find a point of view for himself", and leads imperceptibly through the second question (What does it mean? i.e., What did it mean to those among whom it arose?) to the third question (How did mythology arise?).[18]

Investigations into the origins of mythology admittedly take us "back to an age that has left no historical evidence". And yet, from the historical evidences we do have, we can draw inferences with respect to pre-historic times, and our theories must be consistent with these inferences as well as with mythology itself.[19] Schelling believes the critique which he now offers is quite independent of any philosophical point of view. As theories of the origin and significance of mythology are examined, "some will reveal themselves as unthinkable; others as conceivable but not credible; and still others as credible, perhaps, but inconsistent with our historical knowledge".[20]

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[17] pp. 7,8

[18] p. 10

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[19] pp. 7,11

[20] p. 11

CHAPTER ONE

A CRITIQUE OF NON-RELIGIOUS EXPLANATIONS OF MYTHOLOGY

a. Poetic Explanations.[1]

It is possible to hold that Mythology is purely and simply a product of the poetic imagination, and that "the mythological representations have been created not in order to affirm or teach something, but only in order to satisfy an urge toward poetic invention."[2] Strictly entertained, this view would eliminate any need for us to puzzle over the particular meaning and truth of Mythology, on the simple ground that no such was ever intended.[3]

Although Schelling does not actually impute this view to anyone, he does recognize that many who enjoy Mythology as poetry have often evidenced a great dislike of "any investigation which tends to assign to Mythology a meaning other than ideal" and have opposed any search for the grounds of the gods (causis Deorum). Possessed of a "tender solicitude for the poetic aspect of the gods," such persons fear that investigations which go to the root of the matter would be prejudicial to or destructive of this poetic element. But philosophical investigation and poetic appreciation are not antithetical. Just as "everyone is free to view nature from a purely aesthetic standpoint without implying opposition to the investigation of natural phenomena or to the Philosophy of Nature", so "anyone may look at mythology from the purely poetic point of view" without feeling threatened by philosophical investigation into the nature and origin of mythology.[4]

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[1] pp. 12-27 [2] pp. 13f

[3] Poetry is here taken by Schelling as "the natural opposite of truth." (p. 12)

Two questions must be answered in connection with this poetic view. First, did poetry really precede and give birth to mythology? And second, does the poetic view necessarily exclude from mythology all truth content? As far as the first question is concerned, the truth, says Schelling, is just the reverse, for it was mythology which preceded and gave birth to poetry!

> "Every poetic invention presupposes some ground, some independent basis from which it takes its rise. A poetic work cannot be merely concocted or plucked out of thin air. It must have some foundation in fact. Even the poem which is most free and which seems to be a completely subjective invention having no reference to real events, rests none the less, in the last analysis, on the actual common incidents of human life.
>
> Moreover, each separate (poetic) event must bear a resemblance to those which are certified and accepted as true, - as Odysseus said of his stories (Od. XIX, 203) - even when the whole succession and concatenation of these poetic events borders on the incredible. The so-called marvels (Wunderbare) of the Homeric epic do not constitute an objection against the poem. They have an actual basis in the theodicy which already existed and which, from Homer's point of view, was true. The supernatural became natural because the gods who intervene in human affairs belonged to the real world of that time, a world in whose existence men once believed, and because the order of things implied in the representations of the gods conformed to the accepted order of things.

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[4] pp. 12f.

> But if the Homeric poetry has as its background this whole great complex belief in the gods, how could one maintain that this belief, in its turn, has poetry as its background. Clearly, nothing preceded this belief in the gods; rather did this belief make possible many later things of which free poetic invention was one."[5]

To the second question - Does the poetic explanation necessarily exclude all truth from mythology? - Schelling answers: The poetic view, fully stated, holds that "there is, indeed, a truth in mythology, but not one which has been put there intentionally, and therefore not one which we can take hold of and express as such".[6] The poets who elaborated previously existing theodicies were moved only by the primitive impulse to poetise and intended no particular meaning through their poems. Hence, any truth that mythology might possess is both accidental and eternally elusive. All other interpretations, as we shall see, will assign a quite specific significance to mythology (albeit a different one in each case), but the poetic conception can live with them all.

> "The poetic interpretation can acknowledge that natural phenomena are reflected in the forms of the gods, it can claim to perceive in mythology the first experiences of the rule of invisible powers (Mächte) in human affairs, and can even claim to see in mythology an expression of religious awe - in short, it can concede that everything that could deeply affect early man, not yet master of himself, must have contributed to the birth of mythology... Every meaning is present in mythology, but it is there only potentially, as in a chaos, and does not allow itself to be delimited and particularised. As soon as one tries to delimit and particularise,

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[5] p. 14

[6] p. 14

> the appearance is distorted and even destroyed. But if one leaves each meaning just as it is and takes a delight in this countless number of possible relations, one is in the right frame of mind for the task of interpreting mythology."[7]

The great advantage of the poetic explanation is its simplicity and fairness. "It is without doubt the right or just view in the sense that it excludes no meaning and permits mythology to be taken exactly as it stands. So let us be very careful not to say that it is false".[8]

The objections to the poetic explanation are at least two. The first is its inability to answer the fundamental question of origins: "How or why should mankind (or a primitive people, or the peoples in general in the earliest period of their existence), uniformly seized by an irresistible inner drive, have produced a poetry which had gods and a history of the gods as its content?" The second objection is the poetic view's apparent contradiction of "the systematic character in the succession of the divine generations and of the grave and solemn seriousness which rests on certain parts of the history of the gods".[9]

Before "ascending" to the next explanation, and in order to discover more about the earliest relations between poetry and mythology, Schelling pauses[10] to examine the well-known claim of Herodotus that Homer and Hesiod were the two poets "who provided the Greeks with a theogony".[11]

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[7] pp. 15f.

[8] p. 17

[9] pp. 16f. and p. 50

[10] pp. 17-23

[11] See Herodotus II,53: οὗτοι εἰσιν οἱ ποιήσαντες θεογονίην Ἕλλησιν.

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What does Herodotus mean? Obviously he cannot mean that these two poets created the gods, or even that they invented the history of the gods. Homer [9th C B.C.], for example, was well aware of the antiquity of "the temples, priesthood, sacrifices and altars that formed part of the worship of the gods" in his own day; and Hesiod [8th C B.C.], "who sings the origins of the gods" could not have given an epic exposition of the history of the gods unless such a history had already unfolded. Herodotus must mean, then, that the two poets were "the first to express the history of the gods till then unexpressed", for he does not deny the previous general existence of natural and historical differences among the gods, he merely says that before the poets these differences were not known (οὐκ ἐπιστέαυτο), i.e., they existed in "an obscure, chaotic way".[12]

Schelling distinguishes the question of the origin of the subject-matter (Stoff) and its wrapping from the question of how this came to be unfolded and separated. As far as the first question is concerned, "the mysterious workshop, the first-production place of mythology, lies on the other side of all poetry". Herodotus himself refers to this pre-historic period:

> "The Hellenes, says Herodotus, were preceded by Pelasgians who became Hellenes as a result of a crisis (for the moment we need not say what crisis). And... Herodotus says of these Pelasgians that 'they

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[12] pp. 18, 19.

> sacrificed all to the gods without distinguishing them by name or surname'. Here then is that time in which the history of the gods is hidden away, still unexpressed. Let us think ourselves back into this state in which the confused consciousness struggles with the representations of the gods without being able to disengage itself. Consciousness cannot objectify these representations. Therefore it cannot separate them or explain them... or establish any kind of free relation with them. In this undifferentiated (drangvoll) state, all poetry was impossible. Thus the two most ancient poets, as poets (and setting aside the content of their poems), mark the end of that un-free state and of that 'Pelasgian' consciousness.
>
> This liberation, which came to the consciousness through this differentiation of the representations of the gods, gave to the Hellenes their poets; and the epoch which produced these poets was also the period in which the history of the gods was completely unfolded... Neither precedes the other, but both together simultaneously mark the end of an earlier state, a state of involution and silence."[13]

The role of the poets now becomes clearer. Whereas Herodotus says "Homer and Hesiod", we would say "the age of the two poets" gave to the Hellenes the history of their gods.

> "Herodotus can express himself as he did, for Homer is not an individual* like later poets (Alcaeus*, Tyrtaeus* and others). He designates a whole period; he is the ruling power, the principle of an epoch. What Herodotus means in speaking of the two poets, is what Hesiod means when he relates how Zeus - having ended the struggle against the Titans, and being invited by the gods to assume supreme power - distributed prerogatives and honors among the immortals. With Zeus as sovereign, the real history of the Hellenic gods begins. This critical turning point, the beginning of Hellenic life proper, is referred to by both Hesiod and Herodotus... the poet referring to it mythologically by using the name of Zeus, the historian designating it historically by means of the names of the two poets".

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[13] pp. 20f.

> "...In the Homeric poetry, everything is brand new, so to speak. The historical world of the gods is there in all its fresh, youthful vigour. Only the religious aspect of the gods is ancient (Uralt), but this comes only slightly into view out of a dark and mysterious background. The new thing is the historical aspect of these gods; this is what is created before our eyes. The crisis, by virtue of which the world of the gods develops into the history of the gods, is not something outside the poets; it takes place in the poets themselves; it makes their poetry. Herodotus, therefore, has good reason for saying that the two poets who, in his firm and well-founded opinion, were the earliest poets among the Hellenes, produced the history of the Hellenic gods. They did not, as individuals, create this history (although, of course, it had to be expressed this way). Instead, it was a product of that crisis of the mythological consciousness which found in them its expression.
>
> It could be objected that two poets do not make a history of the gods any more than two swallows make a summer! But there is no analogy here, for the summer could come without any swallows, but the history of the gods comes in the poets themselves, unfolding in them and finding its first expression in them."[14]

This study of the Greeks, "a poetic people par excellence", makes it clear to Schelling that "poetry is indeed the natural result of mythology, and even its necessary and immediate product". But this means, of course, that poetry "could never have been the generative ground or the source of representations of the gods".[15]

Studies in the religious of other ancient peoples likewise fail to reveal the existence of a poetry which might have given birth to the polytheisms.[16] The only people who have in common with the Greeks a free poetry, developed in all forms, are the Hindus, but their poetry too, arises from mythology. Western mastery of Sanscrit had made available to Schelling's generation a new knowledge of Hindu poetry and religion. This occasioned a great deal of enthusiasm for Hinduism and, coupled with the recognition that "the Hindu language belongs to the same formation as the Greek and is nearest to it in grammatical structure", led some "Indomanes" to attribute historical superiority and priority to the Hindus. But enthusiasm for Hinduism can go too far. Schelling deplores "the tiresome intrusion of Hinduism into everything, even into the studies of Genesis" and recalls his long-standing opposition to those who attribute Hindu origins to Greek gods.[17] Like Goethe, Schelling sees the Hindu deities as crude and rather unpoetic. This is because in Hindu mythology "the doctrinal or strictly religious aspect of the gods" is dominant and much more visible than in Greek mythology.

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[14] pp. 21f.

[15] pp. 22, 23. For recent discussion, see W.K.C. Guthrie The Greeks and their Gods, Beacon Paperback 1955, esp. p. 216 "The Gods existed before Homer".

[16] pp. 23-27

> "The crisis which gave to the Greeks their gods, gave them at the same time a freedom in their relations with the gods. The Hindu, on the other hand, has remained in much more profound and inward dependence on his gods. The amorphous epics as well as the artistic dramatic poems of India have a far more dogmatic character than any Greek work of the same genre. The poetic transfiguration of the Greek gods as compared with the Hindu is not simply an original quality of Greek mythology, but the result of the more profound victory over, indeed, the complete conquest of, a power which still has dominion over Hindu poetry".[18]

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[17] pp. 24,25n. See his Divinities of Samothrace.

[18] p. 26

As for the Egyptians, they "fixed their theodicy in huge, monumental structures, and colossal statues, but a supple poetry which treats the gods as free beings, seems completely foreign to them". And the less developed theodicies of the ancient Babylonians and the Phoenicians found expression in "a psalm-like poetry similar to that of the ancient Hebrews", i.e. a doctrinal (dogmatic) poetry, but not a poetry in the full sense of the word.[19] Thus, "nowhere was poetry the primal phenomenon so many explanations suppose".[20]

b. Allegorical (Philosophical)[21] Explanations.

In his second lecture,[22] Schelling turns to a discussion of allegorical interpretations of mythology. These maintain, in general, that there was an original intention to convey truth in mythological guise, but not religious truth. Mythology looks like theory of the gods and history of the gods, hence it appears to have religious meaning, but its truth is actually of another kind. What mythology says is not what it means. As Schelling puts it: "There is truth in mythology, but not in mythology as such".[23] This "truth" may be historical, moral, scientific or philosophical, but whatever it is, it is not religious.

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[19] pp. 26f.

[20] p. 27

[21] "philosophical" because these views attribute to mythology a philosophical (or scientific) content. P. 49.

[22] pp. 28-48

[23] p. 28

The various forms of the allegorical interpretation are reviewed in order to show that in no case do they account for the birth of mythology, and also to discover what contribution they make to a general theory of mythology.

The first view mentioned is Euhemerism, the notion that gods are really deified historical personages and that mythological events are the apotheosis of occurrences in human or civic history. Schelling acknowledges the antiquity of this view, named after Euhemerus, "an Epicurean of the Alexandrian period who seems to have been its most zealous if not its most ancient advocate". But Schelling also notes that Epicurus used the "Euhemeristic" explanation only in order to discredit the popular religion of his day. Epicurus himself believed in the existence of true gods who were entirely indifferent to the affairs of man and nature; hence those popular deities who intervened capriciously in the affairs of men were a challenge to Epicurean dogma and were conveniently dismissed as "men represented under the aspect of gods".[24]

A second form of the allegorical interpretation holds that mythology arose as a result of the poetic personification of moral qualities. But Schelling regards this as a reversal of the true order. He readily admits that the gods can be used as symbols of moral concepts, "for they are moral beings" each endowed with some outstanding spiritual or

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[24] pp. 28f

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emotional attribute, and "once a thing is there it will be used". Bacon, for example, used mythological language to clothe his political ideas (in his tract De Sapientia Veterum), and others used it as a pretentious disguise for their moral preachments. "As the demon says in Calderon's Wondrous Magician:

> "Myths are simply tales wherein
> Writers profane presumed to use,
> With ingenious art, the names of gods
> To enshroud in mystery
> Their moral philosophy".[25]

All of which may be pedagogically expedient, concedes Schelling, but it tells us nothing about the origin of mythology.

A third type of allegorical interpretation looks for physical meanings in mythology, or regards it as a poetic personification of the processes of the natural order. Some have come up with very special physical meanings for mythology -

> "During the period when alchemy was flourishing, its adepts could discern the so-called philosophical process in the battle for Troy... Helen, over whom the battle was fought, was Selene the Moon (the alchemical sign for silver), while Ilios, the holy city, was Helios the Sun (which in alchemy means gold). When anti-phlogistic chemistry began to attract general attention it was believed the substances of this chemistry could be discovered among the masculine and feminine deities of Greece: Aphrodite, for example, was the personification of oxygen...
>
> It is a waste of time to argue with one who interprets mythology in this way, since his discovery brings him the priceless satisfaction of gazing at the reflection of his own most recent opinion in the looking-glass of high antiquity. He therefore finds it unnecessary to tell us how those who supposedly invented the myths, arrived at the excellent knowledge of physical nature imputed to them, or why they enshrouded and concealed their knowledge in so strange a fashion.[26]

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[25] p. 30

[26] pp. 31f.

Such views seem capable of proliferating endlessly, and at least bear witness to the universality of mythology. The difficulty is that once we admit allegorical explanations, "it becomes almost more difficult to say what mythology does not mean than to say what it means".

Interpretations of a more general nature have claimed mythology to be "an allegory of the annual movement of the sun through the signs of the Zodiac", or "a poetic representation of the real history of nature", or even "a theory of the genesis of the natural world (an allegorised cosmogony)".[27]

This "philosophical" or "cosmogonic" explanation was proposed by Heyne.[28] Mythology, he insisted, was created by philosophers, and its original content consisted of more or less coherent philosophemes about the formation of the world. Such views were dressed out in mythological form partly for dramatic effect, and partly because these ancient philosophers lacked a scientific terminology (and were therefore compelled to express abstract concepts as persons and logical and real relations under the metaphor of "generation"). The philosophers knew, of course, that they were not talking about real persons. How then did the personalities they created become real persons and then deities? Because of the poets, concludes Heyne. "The poets noticed that these personifications, taken as real persons, could furnish material for all kinds of amusing

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[27] p. 32

[28] pp. 32-36. Schelling is referring to Heyne's De origine et causis Fabularum Homericarum. Commentt. Gott. T. VIII) pp. 34, 58.

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stories and delightful tales... They therefore separated the mythological personalities from their scientific meanings and assured for them that meaningless character in which alone they are known to popular belief".[29]

These philosopher-scientists, according to Heyne, were not "allegorising", because they did not deliberately fabricate mythological language in order to disguise and cover up their doctrines and opinions. Nevertheless, replies Schelling, they did speak of gods when they were thinking only of natural forces - they neither said what they meant nor meant what they said - and this is allegory. But, after all, Heyne's view is half-hearted, for he accepts the content of mythology as scientific but not its expression.[30] To go all the way and hold that both the form and the content of mythology are scientific, would constitute a complete opposition to the poetic interpretation. And just such a step was taken by Heyne's famous successor in philological studies, Gottfried Hermann. His philosophical-philological interpretation represents a rebellion against allegorical conceptions of mythology and is reviewed by Schelling in some detail.[31]

Hermann believes,[32] as a result of his etymological studies, that what are supposedly the names of gods are nothing but the forms, forces, phenomena and activities of nature.

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[29] p.34, Cf.p.58 [30] pp. 35f. [31] pp. 36-48

[32] Schelling refers to Hermann's Dissert. de Mythol. Graecorum antiquissima Leipzig 1817 and Ueber das Wesen und die Behandlung der Mythologie, Leipzig 1819.

What appear to be personifications are in fact scientific designations of natural objects. Dionysus, for example, is not the god of wine, but the wine itself. Phoebus is not the god of light but the name for light itself. And all the genealogies and inter-relationships of the gods are a deliberate scientific expression of the coherent connections to be found in nature.

This whole assemblage of "mythological" names and relationships was, for Hermann, the invention of an atheistic philosopher-scientist who lived long before the time of Hesiod, (Hesiod's Theogony being simply our earliest witness to this ancient cosmology.) Somewhere, among a people still ignorant and illiterate, some perceptive and especially able individual "conceived the idea of sketching a formal theory of the origin and connection of things". To do it he looked for the distinguishing predicates or functions of things and personified them. For example, since hail comes "hurtling and smashing down" it was called not merely "that which smashes" (a predicate) but "the Smasher" (Kottos), rain became "the Furrowmaker" (Guges), and snow became "the man of Heaviness" (Briareus). "It is not the object itself which is personified, as Heyne's theory would have it, but only, if you will, the expression... It is a purely grammatical personification".[33]

Of course, when Hesiod came across this ancient science, he was, according to Hermann, innocent of its true character and naively took the names to be the names of real gods. Kottos, Guges and Briareus, for example, became for Hesiod the three one-hundred-armed giants. Originally, however, they were not giants at all but natural elements. Hermann regards the doctrine on which the *Theogony* is *based* as "the most admirable masterpiece of antiquity." He sees in the myths, "not some superficial collection of hypotheses, but theories established on the basis of *long experience*, careful *observation* and even exact *calculation*." The whole edifice of mythology[34] is "not only a well-grounded science but a profound wisdom," an "attempt to explain all things naturally." It is proof of an atheistic rather than a theistic way of thinking, for "*of gods there is no trace* unless one wishes to introduce them arbitrarily." In fact, the whole mythology is "a polemic against already existing representations of the gods."[35]

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[33] pp. 37f.

Schelling criticises Hermann's view at several points. In the first place, it is clear that Hermann has limited his

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[34] Schelling gives an account (pp. 39ff.) of Hermann's interpretation of the *Theogony*, especially the opening section, to remind the reader of its philosophic spirit. By positing the initial three elements - Chaos (empty space), Matter (the original formless stuff) and Eros (the Unifier) - the ancient philosopher has "that in which," "that out of which" and "that through or by which" everything can come to be.

[35] pp. 39, 41f. (citing Hermann's *Ueber das Wesen und die Behandlung der Mythologie* pp. 38, 47, 101).

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explanation to the mythological gods proper and has not even tried to explain the origin of belief in the gods in general. Secondly, is it credible that an ancient people "still ignorant and illiterate" could have produced a philosopher of such discernment as Hermann imagines? Thirdly, suppose they did! Suppose some ancient scientific genius came to see that the alleged gods were nothing but nature and its powers and wished to propagate his purely physical knowledge so that people could be forever free of all belief in the gods. Is it credible that such a thinker (or thinkers), who knew better than anyone else that gods did not exist, would invent a whole new mythology *in order to put an end to all religious belief*? How could they have neglected to provide the people with an explanation of the personification which, for its authors, was merely a matter of grammar? Finally, why would the people in question abandon their religion - which was "probably a grossly physical superstition resting on belief in invisible beings behind the phenomena of nature" - in favor of this newly invented mythology? Hermann is asking us to believe that such a people first *misunderstood* the new doctrine (by interpreting these names of natural phenomena to be the names of real deities), then *adopted* it, giving up their meaningful primitive beliefs to believe in a meaningless (to them) set of names.[36]

The conclusion, according to Schelling, is clear: the supposed ancient philosopher-author prior to Hesiod simply did

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[36] pp. 42-44

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not exist. Hesiod himself composed the Theogony substantially as it is. He did not mythologise an earlier science; instead, he himself is the budding philosopher struggling to free himself from an already existing mythology. Hermann's view that Hesiod artlessly understood the names of gods mythologically (i.e., as actually referring to gods) is contradicted by the abstract, impersonal and therefore non-mythological character of the *Theogony*, especially its opening section where many of the names could not have been and were not understood by Hesiod as deities. Gea, for example, produces the mountains but these do not become personalities. Erebos is the place of subterranean darkness (as even Homer knew) not a masculine deity (which Hermann reads into Hesiod). To be sure, the literal and the figurative are jumbled together in the *Theogony*, so that the impersonal, sexless Erebos can "marry" Nyx. But his "child", Aither, is a purely physical notion and his "grandchildren" ("false words" and "ambiguous speech") were never regarded as mythological personalities. Above all, Hermann's principle of grammatical personification comes to grief as early as the first verse - "Behold first of all there was Chaos", for Chaos is not a god or a personality. Chaos is a *purely speculative* notion, betokening the birth of philosophy:

> "The concept of Chaos, placed boldly at the beginning of Hesiod's poem, was totally strange to Homer. But in Aristophanes it has already become the battle-cry of a philosophy which is directed *against* the gods and which strives to go beyond popular beliefs. The concept of Chaos reveals and proclaims in the most unequivocal way the earliest movement of an abstract thinking which is beginning to detach itself from mythology, the first awakening of a free philosophy.

> ...Chaos, which was only later defined as empty space or as a gross mélange of material elements, is a _purely_ _speculative_ notion. It is not the product of some philosophy which preceded mythology, but of a philosophy which _followed_ it, one which strove to comprehend and therefore transcend mythology. Only a mythology which has attained its end and which then, from this vantage point, looks _back_ into its _beginning_, seeking to apprehend and to comprehend itself, could have placed Chaos at the beginning".[37]

Hermann's theory, in Schelling's view, has been worth considering because "it goes as far as possible in the direction of attributing a scientific content to mythology", because it correctly insists "on the presence of the _philosophical_ consciousness at the beginning of the _Theogony_" (though Hermann has misconceptions about it), and because it has used philological analysis to establish beyond doubt the scientific meaning of mythological names.[38] Nevertheless, it has failed to establish the priority of philosophy over mythology. Hesiod in particular is no inventor of mythology but "has it already before him as a model". His poem is "an essential moment in the development of mythology" because it is mythology's first attempt "_to_ _become_ _conscious_ _of_ _itself_, _to_ _represent_ _itself_ _to_ _itself_".

Both Homer and Hesiod, then, mark not the _beginnings_ but the _final_ _stages_ of mythology. Homer shows us how mythology has ended in poetry. Hesiod shows us how it has ended in philosophy.[39]

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[37] pp. 47f.

[38] p. 45

[39] p. 48

c. A Synthesis of Poetic and Philosophical Views

Although Schelling has rejected poetic and philosophical explanations he pauses[40] in his third lecture to ask whether a synthesis of these two explanations would help us to understand the birth of mythology. Can we explain mythology as philosophical poetry or poetic philosophy? The question gives Schelling an opportunity to digress on the affinity between philosophy and poetry and the relation between mythology and language.

There is, he says, "a natural affinity, an all but necessary mutual attraction" between poetry and philosophy. True poetry has a universal and eternal significance, and true philosophy has poetic power. "The same universality and the same necessity are to be required of truly poetic forms as of philosophical concepts". The true poet confers upon his work a kind of mythological power, and the true philosopher will employ concepts which are not mere general categories but real and definite essences. The more the philosopher's concepts are "endowed with real and specific life, the more they seem to approximate poetic forms - even when the philosopher involved holds poetic forms in contempt". In such cases the poetic element does not need to be added on as an external envelope, but is part and parcel of the thought itself.[41]

This affinity, moreover, was originally a unity, for Schelling has shown how both poetry and philosophy arose out

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[40] pp. 49-57

[41] pp. 50f.

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of mythology, whence it follows that they were originally united there. When mythology took possession of human consciousness, it became, so to speak, "the common center or nucleus from which both poetry and philosophy arose". Hence, before mythology was born, poetry and philosophy could not have existed as such, i.e., in their formal opposition. When in the course of time they emerged from mythology and began to move in different directions, they separated very slowly indeed. Philosophy, for example, began to separate from mythology in the work of Hesiod, but "the final separation of philosophy from every mythological and therefore every poetic element, required the whole period from Hesiod to (the purely conceptual mode of exposition of) Aristotle".[42]

Poetry and philosophy, though present in mythology, are not responsible for its birth any more than they are responsible for the creation of language. There is, for Schelling, a general parallel between the rise of mythologies and the formation of languages. He observes that languages characteristically designate by differences of gender things which imply opposite number - for example, der Himmel, die Erde; der Raum, die Zeit; - and notes that this resembles mythology's expression of spiritual concepts by means of masculine and feminine deities. "One is almost tempted to say", concludes Schelling, "that language is only faded mythology which preserves in abstract and formal distinctions what

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[42] p. 51

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mythology still contains in the living and concrete state".[43]

Poetry and philosophy, however, were potentially present in the birth of language, and their actualisation contributed to the material formation of language. Hence, the most ancient languages are, in Schelling's view, treasure-stores of philosophy and poetry.[44] Language arose, he says, "not in a piecemeal or atomistic fashion, but as a whole. All its parts came into existence together in an organic way". He sees in language, a profound objective coherence, a true system of ideas, not introduced intentionally by man but inherently and "purposefully" present. "Just as creative nature, in forming the skull, has already in mind (so to speak) the nerve which must travel through it", so the spirit (Geist) which created language has already in mind its later use as an instrument of philosophical and poetic expression.[45] The poet, for example, simply persuades language to reveal its treasures to him. He does not place them there; they are hidden in language as such. Language, like anything organic, appears to be a product of necessity and chance! Schelling reasons:

> "Since no philosophical consciousness, indeed, since no human consciousness of any kind is conceivable without language, it follows that consciousness could not have

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[43] p. 54. Nevertheless, Schelling does not yield to this temptation, though Cassirer seems to suggest he does and is himself so tempted (See the latter's Philosophy of Symbolic Forms II, pp. 21, 22).

[44] pp. 51-54

[45] pp. 53f. Schelling quotes what Leibnitz says of the German language, viz., "Philosophiae nata videtur".

> presided over the creation of language; and yet, the more deeply we penetrate into the nature of language, the more definitely do we discover that its profundities go far beyond those of the most deliberately conscious creation. It is the same with language as it is with organic beings; we believe their formation is due to blind chance, and yet we cannot deny the unfathomable purposefulness of their formation even down to the smallest detail."[46]

Thus, neither language nor mythology owe their birth to poetry or philosophy (for the actual appearance of these latter presupposes the existence of the former), but both were originally, and in an essential way, potentially poetic and philosophical.

> "Mythology cannot have undergone the influence of a philosophy which had to seek its forms and figures in poetry; rather must that philosophy have been already essentially poetic. And inversely, the poetry which created the forms of mythology could not have been in the service of a philosophy distinct from it, but must itself have been essentially a knowledge-producing activity, i.e., philosophy. It would follow from this last proposition that truth is present in the mythological representations not in a purely accidental way but by virtue of a kind of necessity; and it follows from the first proposition that the poetic element in mythology has not been introduced from without, but is an integral part of its very essence, inseparable from the thought that created it. If the philosophical or doctrinal element is referred to as the Content, and if the poetic aspect is called the Form, one must conclude that the content could never have existed by itself, that it could have arisen only under this form and that the two have grown inseparably, indissolubly together".[47]

Mythology now appears as a natural, organic product - poetic in form and philosophical in content - whose birth, like the birth of any organic entity, is both free and necessary, a kind of "instinctive invention", at once intentional and unintentional. On the one hand, there is nothing merely fabricated or artificial about it; on the other hand, its deepest meaning

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[46] p. 54

[47] pp. 54f.

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and most authentic relations are not merely accidental.[48]

But does this synthetic view really explain the birth of mythology? Not at all, says Schelling, for although it may be a formal improvement to speak of a philosophical poetry or a poetic philosophy as the principle which gives rise to mythology, the fact remains that we are still talking of poetry and philosophy and are no closer to an explanation than we were before. The true explanatory principle must lie above poetry and philosophy, not in them, and the poetic and scientific aspects of mythology must be necessary by-products of this supervenient principle which acts, so to speak, through them.

> "The poetic and scientific elements exist only in the product; they are necessary by-products, but for this very reason they are simply additional and accidental factors. According to the first two interpretations, it was only one of these two elements, the poetic or the doctrinal, which had this supervenient character. Here, however, both are regarded as adventitious and the essential principle, the truly explanatory principle, is independent of them both, being outside and above them."[49]

Schelling's task will be to discover the nature of this third principle (this tertium quid) which has appeared as the source of mythological ideas. All that we presently know of it, is that it dominates poetry and philosophy and can therefore have nothing in common with free invention but must come from an entirely different source. Schelling dismisses clairvoyance, trance, dream, and religious frenzy as the source of mythological ideas, for such explanations cannot be historically justified, and historical justification is essential because mythology is above all a historical phenomenon. The true explanation of mythology will have to show "by what natural or divine decree" mythological ideas were imposed in one period or another on the human race (or part of it).[50]

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[48] p. 55

[49] pp. 56f.

d. Mythology as an Individual or Collective Invention

Schelling now returns to a notion shared by both the poetic and the philosophical explanations, to wit, the assumption that mythology is an invention.[51] That this invention was the work of an individual or individuals (e.g. poets, philosophers) has already been denied. And Schelling insists again that anyone who knows what its mythology means to a people, will understand perfectly well that it cannot be introduced like some academic program or imposed like a catechism.

> "To create a mythology, to give it that credibility and reality in the thought of men which it needs in order to achieve even that degree of popularity which makes it poetically useful - this is something which goes beyond the power of any individual to accomplish." ...(Could individuals possibly have given rise to) "the living streams of religious myth and legend which poured out deep and powerful, as if from some unfathomable source, and flooded the prehistoric world?
> ...Did belief in gods, with all its vast mysterious power, evolve merely from some arbitrary reflection, from some limited, poorly-informed intelligence which produced childish personifications and notions about nature?[52]

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[50] p. 57

[51] pp. 58-68

[52] pp. 58f, 61. Cf. p. 50

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The more plausible alternative is to see mythology, not as an individual invention, but as the "instinctive invention" of a whole _people_. One could hold that "a people's mythology is so interwoven into its life and essence that it must be its own creation." Just as certain families of animals instinctively work together on some common project, so men who belong to the same people (_Volk_) form a spiritual community by a kind of necessity, and in continuing concerted action create a product like mythology.[53] We find, indeed, that there exists in a human community both a folk-poetry (_Volkspoesie_) and a worldly wisdom (_Weltweisheit_). This natural folk-poetry is made up of legends, tales and songs of forgotten origin and more ancient than any poetic _art_ (_Dichtkunst_). And this natural wisdom, inspired by the incidents of everyday life or the lessons of social life, continually invents new proverbs, riddles and parables. Thus one could hold that "as a result of the interaction of natural poetry and natural philosophy in real life - i.e., without premeditation or deliberate intent - the community created those higher forms which it needed to fill up its emptiness of mind and imagination."[54]

But there are two major difficulties with this notion that mythology is the collective invention of a people. In the first place, how does it account for mythology as a _general_ phenomenon? The fact is, says Schelling, that many peoples have produced mythologies and these mythologies bear a striking resemblance to one another! How are we to account for this? Was the same series of chance events repeated over and over again in different communities? But this is incredible. Perhaps, then, there was a process of propagation or dissemination from some original source. This was Hermann's view which Schelling has already judged to be fanciful.[55] Must we believe, then, that the material agreements of the various mythologies are purely external and the result of chance? But this is not possible, says Schelling, for the mythologies are not superficially similar; they evidence an inward affinity, "a blood relationship":

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[53] pp. 61f. Wolf's studies in Homer provide Schelling with a striking analogy, for though the Iliad and the Odyssey read as if written by one man, "they were apparently written by a whole generation (_Geschlecht_) of men." [This view now appears to be rejected. See Meyer Reinhold, _Classics, Greek and Roman_, New York, 1946, p. 7].

[54] p. 62

> "If the Greeks had received their Demeter from the Egyptians, then Demeter, like Isis, would have had to search for a slain husband, and Isis, like Demeter, for a kidnapped daughter. The resemblance, however, is restricted to the fact that both are searching for something that was lost. And since what is lost is different in each case, the Greek representation cannot be a mere reproduction of the Egyptian; it must have arisen independently of the latter. The resemblances are not like those which exist between an original and a copy; they do not suggest a unilateral descent of the one mythology from the other, but that all mythologies have a common extraction (Abkunft). The similarity of mythologies is not externally explicable, for it is based, so to speak, on a blood-relationship."[56]

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[55] Hermann believed that the mythology of the Greeks, Egyptians, Hindus, indeed, the mythology of the whole world, had its origin in a cosmogony conceived by one or several individuals very much by accident, dressed up, misunderstood, yet firmly believed and transmitted from people to people. In Hesiod's poem, for example, the original oriental names have been skillfully imitated and replaced by Greek equivalents, says Hermann, who claims that this technique of "transmission" as well as the content of the original cosmogony have been revealed by his etymological-grammatical method of interpretation. Cf. pp. 59, 61, 63.

[56] p. 64.

Thus, the fact of mythology as a general phenomenon remains an objection to the "collective invention" theory. It is a fact that cannot be explained in external, mechanical terms, and Schelling will return to it later.

The second fundamental difficulty in the view that mythology is a community invention, is its presupposition of the prior existence of the people who allegedly invent a mythology for themselves, for such a prior existence is impossible if it be true, as Schelling claims, that a people as such cannot exist without a mythology.

> "What is a people? What is it that makes human beings into a people? It is certainly not the mere spatial co-existence of a greater or lesser number of physically similar individuals. No, it is the community of consciousness among them. This community of consciousness finds in the common language only an indirect expression. Where, therefore, are we to find the community of consciousness itself, along with its reason for being, if not in a common world view? And where is a people's world-view originally contained and given, if not in its mythology? It seems impossible, therefore, for a people already constituted as such to receive a mythology after the event - whether through the invention of one of its individual members, or as a result of a kind of collective instinct...for we cannot conceive of a people existing without a mythology."
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> "It could be argued, perhaps, that a people is held together by virtue of some common undertaking, like cultivation of the land or trade, and by virtue of common customs (morality), laws, governing authorities, etc. No doubt all this belongs to the concept of a people, but it seems almost unnecessary to call to mind the intimate relation which exists, among every people, between magisterial control, legislation, customs, even occupations, on the one hand, and representations of the gods on the other. The question is precisely whether all this, which is presupposed by, indeed, given with a people, can be conceived as existing apart from those religious representations which are to be found only in mythology."[57]

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[57] pp. 64f.

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Where primitive tribes are found to have no religion, they are also found to have no sense of community.[58] For that matter, take away his mythology and the Greek is no longer a Greek, the Egyptian no longer an Egyptian. It is absurd to suppose that a people exists for a time and then decides to invent a language, laws, and a mythology for itself. The truth is, says Schelling, that a people is not a people at all till it has these things. It becomes a particular people by virtue of its language, laws, etc. "It receives along with its existence as a people, the law of its life and of its development, and all the laws which emerge in the course of its history can only have been received in and with the world-view which comes to a people at its birth, and which is contained in its mythology."[59]

The birth of mythology, then, coincides with the birth of peoples. "A mythology is the individual folk-consciousness of a people." A people's mythology does not arise out of its history, rather does the mythology determine the history.

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[58] Schelling leans heavily upon Azara's Voyages for field support for this thesis, and quotes Azara's reports on South American tribes (65n, 66n). Of the Pampas, Guanas and Lenguas, Azara concludes: "They form one people as little as a collection of wolves or foxes do. They are even less sociable than many animals who do live and work together in community - e.g., the beavers, ants or bees." ..."Any attempt to make a people out of them, i.e., to create a social bond among them, would be fruitless. If such a bond is forcibly introduced, the tribe is simply destroyed; and this is proof that there is no power, divine or human, that can make a people out of what was not born as a people at the very beginning, and that where an original unity and community of consciousness is lacking, nothing can be done to create it."

[59] p. 66

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"The mythology of a people constitutes its destiny (just as the character of a man is his fate); it is the fate that befell it in the beginning. Who would deny that with the theodicy of the Hindus, Greeks, etc., the whole history of such peoples was given!"[60]

Schelling's insight here makes it clear that the origin of mythology goes back to a period in which it is simply meaningless to talk about invention (be it individual or collective), artistic clothing of ideas, popular misunderstandings and other such conditions as assumed by Heyne, Hermann and others. Poetic and philosophical explanations have erred in assuming the prior historical existence of peoples. Schelling does not say, of course, that these earlier explanations contain no truth at all, but simply points out that they fail to penetrate back to the period which saw the rise of mythology.[61] The true explanation must lie elsewhere.

e. Conclusion

The examination of these non-religious explanations has contributed to our understanding of mythology. We have seen that mythology is not an invention, individual or collective; that its formation was neither accidental nor fabricated, but free and necessary like the birth of any natural, organic product; that it is the common nucleus from which both poetry and philosophy emerge; that it has been elaborated by poets and philosophers, but that its poetic and scientific aspects

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[60] p, 67

[61] pp. 67f.

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are simply necessary by-products of a supervenient tertium quid which acts through them; that there are family resemblances among the various mythologies; that the birth of mythologies coincides with the birth of peoples; that a mythology represents the individual folk-consciousness of a people and is a real force which takes possession of consciousness and constitutes a nation's destiny.

But the explanations so far discussed have refused to ascribe any original religious significance to mythology. The poetic explanation holds that if, at the beginning, mythology contained truth (religious or otherwise) it was a pure accident. The philosophic view concedes an original truth in mythology but insists it was not religious truth for such was deliberately excluded. Schelling must move, therefore, beyond these inadequate explanations and look to those which recognise that the mythological representations "must have been meant as truth, the whole, complete truth, and therefore as a theory of the gods (Götterlehre)." He has to explain how mythology could have arisen in this sense, i.e., he must turn to religious explanations.[62]

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[62] p. 68

CHAPTER TWO

A CRITIQUE OF (SUBJECTIVE) RELIGIOUS EXPLANATIONS OF MYTHOLOGY

The religious explanations of Mythology have taken many forms and these, too, must be examined one by one until "the last, highest and therefore necessarily true explanation" is reached.[1] Schelling begins by considering Mythology as:

a. A Development out of "primitive religion"?

The phrase "primitive religion" is not Schelling's. When he uses the word "religion" he means Mythological or Revealed or Philosophical Religion. He does not regard the objects of primitive religious belief as gods in the proper sense, and finds it incredible that Mythology could have developed out of such crude and disparate notions. We must be careful not to misunderstand Schelling here. He readily admits that mankind developed a primitive belief in real beings behind the phenomena of nature, due perhaps "to ignorance of the true causes of natural phenomena, or to the influence of a purely unreflecting animal terror," or to the primitive human tendency to see in every act of nature the manifestation of freedom and will.[2] He even agrees that men, having come to fear these superior, capricious powers, must have sought to win their favor by giving evidences of submissiveness (whence the saying, *Primus in orbe Deos fecit timor*). But he refuses to refer to belief in such beings as the first religion. Those who speak of a pre-mythological stage of gross superstition (Hermann) or a primitive state in which brutish man peopled nature with meaningless spirits as brutish as himself (J.H. Voss) are quite in error in supposing such to have been the soil from which mythological religion grew. Even David Hume went astray here.[3] Holding that belief in many gods arose through man's reflections not so much on the life of nature - which would have suggested a single being - as on the ceaseless changes and contradictions within human life itself, Hume went on to claim that the first real polytheism became mythological when important human beings were incorporated into the ranks of those primitive, religiously-venerated beings. Nevertheless, Hume does not claim that those primitive nature spirits are "gods" in the proper sense, and Schelling agrees:

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[1] See Lecture Four, pp. 69-95 [2] p. 70

> "If these invisible beings, which are supposedly connected with the processes of nature, are gods, it would follow that the mountain and water spirits of the Celtic people, the goblins of the Germanic tribes, and the fairies of the peoples of both East and West, must also be gods. But they have never been so regarded. The Greek imagination also produced Oreads, Dryads and Nymphs which, to be sure, were venerated to some extent as servants of the gods, but were never themselves considered to be deities. The fear experienced in the presence of such beings, even the gifts by which men sought to win their favor and to put them in a kind and friendly mood, does not constitute proof that these beings were worshiped as divine, i.e., that they were regarded as having religious significance. Such attempts to postulate gods without God seem not to have appreciated the true

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[3] pp. 70ff.

> force, the real import of the concept, for it is not proper to give to creations of this kind the name of gods. Hume himself agrees with this point when he says: 'Closely considered, this supposed religion is in reality only an atheism compounded with superstition. The objects of their adoration have absolutely nothing in common with our idea of divinity.' In another passage he says that if one were to eliminate from the beliefs of ancient Europe God and the angels (for the angels, as instruments of the divinity without wills of their own, are not conceivable without the divinity) and retain only the fairies and goblins, there would emerge a belief similar to this so-called polytheism."[4]

Contemporary primitives appear to Schelling to give empirical support to his view. Azara, for example, had described South American savages who believed in the presence of "spectre-like beings" behind the phenomena of nature but who nevertheless had no religion. Since Schelling holds that "acts of adoration are visible acts," the question whether or not a tribe possesses a religious cult can be settled by simple observation. And since he believes Azara is a careful, independent and unprejudiced observer, he trusts his report "that there was no act of those savages which indicated religious veneration of any object whatsoever," and accepts his conclusion "that they had no religion."[5]

The rejection of the view that mythology developed naturally out of primitive religion involves both a question of definition and the question of Schelling's presuppositions

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[4] pp. 75f. Schelling is quoting from a French translation of Hume's Natural History of Religion, pp. 25,35.

[5] pp. 74f. On p. 75n Schelling quotes from Azara's description of "the savages who rove the broad plains of the La Plata river, and who experience unreasoning fear in the presence of anything in nature that is mysterious and invisible". (Voyages II, pp. 3f).

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which must be examined in the sequel. For the present, we simply note that Schelling is now free to approach "the truly religious" explanations of mythology.

> "Our discussion so far has dealt merely with the question as to which explanations could be called religious and which could not. Sound reason tells us that polytheism cannot be atheism and that true polytheism cannot be something from which all trace of theism is absent. Gods, properly speaking, must somehow have God as their ground, whether this be through numerous intermediate links or in some other way. One does not alter this fact by deciding that mythology is false religion, for false religion is not therefore irreligion, just as error (or at least what deserves to be called error) is not complete absence of truth but simply truth itself perverted or distorted."[6]

These "truly religious" explanations of mythology have to deal with the difficult question of "how God could have been the original ground of polytheism."[7] Here again various possibilities are examined one by one. Can mythology be considered as:

b. A creation of man's religious instinct?

One could posit in man a religious instinct and hold that just as every instinct seeks the object which corresponds to it, so this religious instinct, groping and grasping for its object, produced true polytheism. Driven on by his mysterious presentiment of an unknown God, man searched for the deity in the elements and in the stars, then in inorganic forms, and later in organic beings, representing him first in animal form and finally endowing him with human attributes.

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[6] p. 76

[7] p. 77

Theories which regard the mythological gods as deified natural essences belong here, says Schelling, because such theories presuppose a primary intuition of God.[8]

This explanation would acquire a more philosophical character, however, if nature were left entirely out of the picture and the idea of God regarded as a completely inward creation independent of the external world. The *Notitia Dei insita* is an ancient theory which can only mean that a consciousness of God existed in man *in potentia*. It could be held that, by virtue of a necessary law, this potential consciousness passed over into actuality and rose to the level of a real consciousness of God.

> "One would have to suppose that the instinct we mentioned possesses an immanent law (the same law as that which determines the successive phases of nature) by virtue of which man goes through the whole of nature finding God yet losing him again at every stage, until he arrives at the true God, the one who transcends all moments or phases and who stands therefore even above Nature which, in relation to him, becomes a mere moment in the past. Since God is the *goal* (the *terminus ad quem*) of this ascending movement, the belief in God exists at every stage, and the final content of the polytheism which is born in and through this process is truly God himself."[9]

Schelling concedes that the assumption of a religious instinct is not yet comprehensible, but he regards the theory that springs from it as "the prototype" of the explanation he is seeking. It is free of all external and arbitrary assumptions and is the first explanation to derive mythology from a purely inward and necessary movement. "If this instinct is powerful enough to keep mankind moving toward the true God, it must be something real, an actual power (Potenz)." What Schelling is trying to understand is the actual formation of mythology not merely its theoretical possibility, and "the hypothesis of a religious instinct ...could be the first step toward the insight that mythology is not to be explained in terms of a purely theoretic (ideal) relation between consciousness and any object whatsoever."[10]

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[8] pp. 77f. Schelling refers here to the theories of Volney: *Origine de tous les Cultes*, and Dupuis: *Les Ruines*.

[9] pp. 78f.

c. The disintegration of an original rational Theism?

The possibility that mythology represents the distortion or decomposition of some prior religious doctrine is much more difficult to establish than the view that it sprang from an innate idea of God. Schelling reproduces Hume's argument against it. He recalls that for Hume the truly religious meaning of mythology is not its original meaning. Hence Hume had supported his view by attacking (i) the idea of a religious instinct (which he rejects chiefly because he believes no two people agree on matters of religion), (ii) the doctrine of innate ideas (which he dismisses as passé), and (iii) the suggestion that there was a prior religious doctrine.[11]

Such a pre-mythological religious doctrine, Hume argues, could only have been a "scientifically-founded one, a theism established by logical reasoning (theisme raisonné)." But this would presuppose a trained and soundly equipped reason on the part of man, which is inconceivable in that primitive, pre-mythological period. Can we really believe that those ignorant masses conceived the deity theistically rather than in crude anthropomorphic terms? (Theism, for Hume, means belief in a most perfect being, an intelligent world-creator, etc.). "We might as easily suppose that there were palaces before there were huts, or that geometry preceded agriculture."[12] But if we suppose, for the sake of argument, that such a rationally-adduced antecedent theism did exist, it is clear that men would never have abandoned this belief in order to plunge into idolatry. Schelling follows Hume's reasoning:

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[10] p. 79

[11] p. 80

> "Speculative insights, arrived at through reasoning, are quite different from distortion-prone historical facts. In the case of opinions grounded on reasoned argument, there are two possibilities: either the proofs are clear and intelligible enough to convince everyone, in which case they would be sufficient to maintain the opinion in all its pristine purity no matter how widespread it became; or else the proofs are abstruse, transcending the powers of comprehension of ordinary men, so that the doctrines supported by such proofs are known to only a few individuals and sink into oblivion as soon as these men cease to concern themselves with them. In either case, the hypothesis of an antecedent theism - one which deteriorated into polytheism - appears impossible, for arguments of the first kind (the popular proofs) would have prevented such a theism from becoming corrupted, while the difficult and abstract arguments would have removed it from the consciousness of the great multitude who are alone responsible for the distortion of principles and opinions."[13]

What sometimes looks like Theism in ancient times, is explained by Hume as mere appearance: one of the idolatrous nations raises to the highest rank one of the supposedly invisible beings, exaggerating his attributes until he is conceived as supreme, infinite and without equal. But Schelling agrees with Hume in regarding such a Theism as really Atheism.[14]

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[12] p. 81; Hume, op. cit., p. 5.

[13] p. 82; Hume, op. cit., pp. 8 - 10. [But Cf. the possibilities that the masses as well as the learned may lose interest, or may distort principles supported by popular proofs.]

d. A development out of an original revelation?

If the doctrine which supposedly preceded mythology was too rich and systematic to have been invented by man, perhaps it was given to him, i.e., divinely revealed, so that mythology could be understood as deriving somehow or other from revelation.[15] Now, "the very actus of revelation is a real process," and the advantage of this explanation is that it entails "a real relation of God to the human consciousness," enabling us, for the first time, to account for the irresistible power of mythological religion. Consider, for example, the indisputable authority with which unnatural deeds and sacrifices were commanded - like the burning alive of the best loved children in honor of some God or other! Cosmogonic philosophers could never have bestowed such authority on the gods. "Only a supernatural fact, which left a confused and lasting impression, could have imposed silence on the natural sentiment which resists such unnatural demands."[16] In revelation we are dealing not with a general God but a specific God, not with theism but with monotheism, not with religion in general but with the true religion.

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[14] pp. 82f. Hume, op.cit., pp.45f. [15] pp. 83ff.

[16] p. 84

Such a theory, says Schelling - the theory that a revelation or a revealed monotheism preceded polytheism - enjoyed undisturbed favor from the beginning of the Christian era right down to the appearance of David Hume. "It was considered impossible that polytheism could have arisen other than through the corruption of a pure religion; and inseparable from this hypothesis, so to speak, was the notion that this pure religion originated in a divine revelation."[17]

But how can we understand this revealed monotheism? It cannot signify merely the Unicity of God, for how could polytheism be derived from the pure negation of any others outside the One? "What possibility of multiplicity remains once abstract Oneness is postulated?" Perhaps, then, this Unity which disintegrated into polytheism represented the sum of all relations of God to nature and the world, as Lessing seems to have assumed when he wrote in his Education of the Human Race:

> "Let us suppose that the first man to come into the world was endowed immediately with the concept of a single God. Even so, such a concept (one which was communicated to him, not acquired or earned by him) could not possibly have existed for long in its purity. For human reason, left to its own resources, would no sooner have begun to reflect upon it, than it would have dissolved the incommensurable One into diverse commensurate parts, and attributed to each of these parts a particular characteristic. In this natural way, polytheism and idolatry would have come into existence."[18]

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[17] p. 85

[18] p. 85 from Lessing op. cit., Sections 6 and 7.

Here, observes Schelling, the statement that a non-acquired notion, as such, is subject to corruption, is true; but the further claim, that mythology arose only when reason went to work on the revealed concept of a single God, attributes a *rational* not a *religious* origin to polytheism.

Perhaps the theory that mythology derived from revelation can be understood in other ways. For example, it may be possible to hold, with Cudworth, that God "turns a different face toward each aspect of the world" without himself thereby becoming manifold; that such aspects were given names (as happens in the Old Testament, for example); that these names were later regarded as distinct deities; and that when men began to worship these deities, polytheism was born.[19] Or perhaps we could regard the divine *history*, given through revelation, as the substance of a later polytheism, although no one has *actually claimed* that the moments of this history suffered mythological distortion. Still, some have seized upon the human side of the history of revelation and resorted to Euhemeristic interpretations of the Mosaic writings. "The Greek *Cronos*," for example, "who had committed an outrage against his father Ouranos, was supposed to be the Biblical Shem deified by the pagans - for Shem had been guilty of an outrage against *his* father, Noah." Such euhemeristic use of the Old Testament to account for pagan mythology was initiated chiefly by Gerhard Voss and carried to its most absurd consequences by Daniel Huet.[20] Such interpretations, however, are sententiae dudum explosae, says Schelling, and should not be dragged out again. The nineteenth century brought new possibilities:

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[19] pp. 86f.

> "Until the end of the eighteenth century all attempts to connect mythology and revelation were kept within such limits as these. In the nineteenth century, however, thanks to the considerable enrichment of our knowledge of the various mythologies, particularly the religious systems of the Orient, it became possible to hold a freer opinion, one more independent of the written documents of revelation."[21]

e. A Disintegrated Monotheism (Creuzer)?

The "freer opinion" Schelling mentions was based on the fact that the nineteenth century established agreements between Egyptian, Hindu and Greek mythologies, so that slowly there came into view "an ensemble of representations common to the different mythologies and expressive of their unity." But how were these resemblances to be explained? Where was the unitive ground of all the theodicies? Not in the consciousness of a single people, declares Schelling, "for each people becomes conscious of itself as a separate people only when it turns aside from this unity;" and not in the consciousness of a single people regarded as the source and common ancestor of all others (as Bailly erroneously suggested).[22] But this leaves open the possibility of an "Original whole," a primeval system, inspired or communicated by an original revelation (Uroffenbarung) to the whole human race. Such a system could be reconstructed by taking the "Mosaic doctrine"[23] and supplementing it with a knowledge of all the world's mythologies.

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[20] pp. 87f. See Gerhard Voss: De Origine et Progressu Idolatriae, and Daniel Huet: Demonstratio Evangelica. Schelling writes (p. 88) "Huet tries to prove that Taut of the Phoenicians, Adonis of the Syrians, Osiris of the Egyptians, Zoroaster of the Persians, Cadmus and Danaus of the Greeks - in short, all the divine and human personalities of the various mythologies are really the same individual: Moses!"

[21] p. 89.

William Jones, founder and first President of the Asiatic Society of Calcutta, is regarded by Schelling as the first to have come to such conclusions - conclusions based on the agreements between Oriental, Greek and Hebrew religion.[24] But Friedrich Creuzer, whose Symbolik und Mythologie der Alten Völker (1810-1824) demonstrated most clearly that the theory of an original religious meaning of mythology is not in conflict with historical evidence, did most to revive this idea of an original whole.

> Creuzer conceived "a system of human science of immemorial antiquity which deteriorated little by

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[22] Schelling on p. 89 criticises Bailly's concept of an Urvolk (in the latter's History of Astronomy and his Letters Concerning the Origin of the Sciences): "It is a proposal which cancels itself out for one of two reasons: either one conceives of this original people as endowed with the distinctive characteristics of an actual people, in which case the existence of other peoples outside it is presupposed and the Urvolk can no longer be understood as containing the unity of all; or the Urvolk is represented as lacking all particularity and all individual consciousness in which case it is not a people at all but simply primitive mankind to which the notion of a 'people' does not apply."

[23] p. 90. "Moses' doctrine gave no complete idea of this system but was, so to speak, merely an extract from it. Established in order to oppose polytheism and keep it in check this Mosaic doctrine....maintained the purely negative attitude of rejection of polytheism." [24] pp. 90f.

> little, or perhaps suffered some sudden destruction and covered the earth with its ruins. Since the fragments are distributed among all people, the whole is not to be found among any one people and is to be reconstituted only by consulting all the peoples of earth..."[25]

> "Since, however, it is not revelation itself, but only that which revelation deposits in consciousness, which is subject to alteration, a mediating theory was needed, but one in which God was represented not only in a theistic fashion, i.e., not merely as God in his separation from the world, but also as a Unity embracing Nature and the World. This unity could be conceived ...pantheistically; or it could be understood after the fashion of those ancient oriental emanation-theories according to which a divinity free of all multiplicity descends in a plurality of finite forms which are only so many manifestations or, to use a recently favored word, incarnations of its infinite essence. Either way, the theory would not postulate an abstract monotheism, absolutely exclusive of multiplicity, but a real monotheism positing multiplicity within itself."[26]

The resemblances between the mythologies thus receives its simplest explanation, says Schelling, in this theory of an original monotheism which later disintegrated into polytheism. Mythology is a disintegrated monotheism, and so far this is "the highest explanation" to which the ascending, step-by-step inquiry has led. Schelling defers his critique of this hypothesis and here acknowledges only its merit.[27]

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[25] "As a result of Creuzer's work, there can never again be a return to explanations which put together the content of mythology atomistically." "Perhaps one could liken mythology to a great musical piece played mechanically, so to speak, by a number of men who have lost all sense of musical relation, rhythm and measure, so that it seems to be nothing but an inextricable mass of discord. The same composition, skillfully and artistically produced, would reveal again its harmony, coherence and original rational structure." p. 91 and 91n.

[26] pp. 91f.

> "No one will deny that this point of view has more grandeur than previous conceptions, if only because its starting point is not the indeterminate multiplicity of objects brought forth by chance from nature, but the center of a unity which dominates the multiplicity. Mythology is not governed by partial beings of a highly adventitious and ambiguous nature, but by the idea of the necessary and universal being before whom alone the human spirit bows down. It is this which exalts mythology to the status of a true system of elements which belong to one another; a system which, even in the time of separation, stamps its distinctive character on each individual representation. Hence, its end result cannot be a merely indeterminate multiplicity, but must be polytheism, i.e., a multiplicity of gods.[28]

But serious difficulties arise. How is this "monotheistic hypothesis" to be understood. If, as Schelling has established, the various mythologies (and therefore polytheism in general) arise only in and with the birth of peoples, then this supposed monotheism must belong to the period prior to the formation of peoples. If so, then the causal-relationship between the separation of the peoples and the emerging polytheism is conceivable in two ways: either (with Creuzer) mankind separated into peoples, thus causing the break up of the original monotheism and a resultant polytheism, or polytheism emerged first, thus causing the separation into peoples.[29] The logic of Schelling's inquiry will thus force him to look more deeply into three issues: i) the origin of "people-hood" (Völkerthum), ii) the nature of polytheism and, iii) the true understanding of this alleged primitive monotheism.

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[27] p. 93. On pp. 125 and 139ff Creuzer's theory is seen as "hopelessly inadequate."

[28] p. 93

[29] p. 94

CHAPTER THREE

MYTHOLOGY AND THE BIRTH OF NATIONS

The investigation into the origins of mythology has now raised the question of the origin of peoples with which the emergence of mythology appears intimately connected. How is it that the human species finds itself divided up into nations or peoples (Völker)?[1] Assuming the unity of man's origin, as Schelling does,[2] and recognising that primitive man existed only in families, tribes and clans, the question of the origin of peoples becomes a puzzle.

They could not have arisen as a spontaneous outcome of the proliferation and physical dispersion of the human race, for purely spatial separation and merely external causes (natural catastrophes, forced migrations and the like) would have produced only branches (Stämme) or "parts of similar kind" and never those dissimilar, heterogeneous groups we know as the nations of the earth. The Arabs, for example, remain non-peoples and basically homogeneous though separated into Eastern and Western groups.[3] Furthermore, the formation of peoples is neither determined nor prevented by emergent physical, racial or even class distinctions. The Hindus, for example, are "a people among whom a physical difference, which comes close to being a racial difference, produced only a division into castes and did not destroy the unity of the nation."[4]

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[1] This issue is the concern of Lecture 5, pp. 96-120.

[2] p.99. Schelling writes: "We hold to the unity of origin, not simply for the sake of tradition or in the interests of some moral sentiment, but solely for scientific reasons. The hypothesis finds support in the fact that even individuals of mixed racial origin are able to procreate, and we will maintain it unless and until it can be proved incapable of comprehending and explaining the natural and historical differences which characterise mankind." p. 100.

[3] pp. 96ff Cf p. 131.

a. The Crisis or Transition

We are forced, Schelling believes, to conceive an inward not an external cause. The separation of the peoples must have been due to a profound spiritual (geistige) crisis, arising within human consciousness while mankind still existed in its original homogeneous, undivided state. Schelling's argument here is characteristically based on logic and appeal to psychological and social analogy:

> "Everyday experience reminds us that in some cases a spiritual apathy will keep back certain physical developments, whereas a great spiritual movement elicits certain physical developments or deviations. We know too that the number and complexity of disorders increased along with the multiplicity of man's spiritual developments, and that just as a sickness overcome in the life of an individual often marks the beginning of a profound spiritual transformation, so new and violent disorders appear as parallel symptoms of great spiritual emancipations.
>
> Now if the division of mankind into peoples was not effected merely by spatial distance or external barriers or even by purely natural differences, but if such compact and mutually exclusive masses of men were created by inward and spiritual factors, it follows that the original unity of undivided mankind, to which we must ascribe a certain duration, could not possibly have persisted unless a spiritual power had maintained that original state of immobility and prevented the seeds of divergent physical developments present within primitive humanity from developing and exercising their influence. It also follows that mankind could not have left that state, in which there was no differentiation into nations but merely division into tribes or families (wo keine Völker-, sondern blosse Stammesunterschiede waren), unless a spiritual (geistige) crisis of the most profound significance had unfolded in the human consciousness and been sufficiently powerful to

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[4] p. 101

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> compel humanity, hitherto undivided, to disintegrate into peoples."[5]

Two forces, or principles, or spiritual powers, or Gods are thus distinguished by Schelling. The first preserved mankind in a state of "perfect and absolute uniformity," although there were divisions based on purely external distinctions. Of this power, Schelling says:

> "It must have been a God, One who completely filled the consciousness which was common to all mankind and who drew mankind into his own unity, so to speak, forbidding to man any movement or deviation, whether to the right or to the left, as the Old Testament frequently states. Only a God of this kind could have conferred a duration on that absolute immobility, that period when all development was at a standstill...The duration we assign to this period of homogeneous humanity is of no importance for it was a period in which nothing happened. Its significance is merely that of a starting point, a terminus a quo from which to begin our reckoning."[6]

The second power or God produced the inner spiritual "crisis" already mentioned. The appearance of this other God or Gods - i.e., the emergence of polytheism - resulted in "a shaking of consciousness," an alteration of "the very foundation and principle of consciousness," and was followed "necessarily and irresistibly" by a break-up of the primeval unity of the human race and the division into peoples.

> "It was polytheism which was cast into the midst of homogeneous humanity as the instrument of separation. Various theodicies, which deviated from one another and even, in the course of time, excluded one another, became the infallible instrument for the separation of mankind into peoples."[7]

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[5] p. 102

[6] pp. 106, 105f. This state Schelling later calls the "Natural State" (Naturstand) of man, the "Golden Age of the World" pp. 177f.

[7] p. 106. Cf. pp. 130ff.

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But these two powers or Gods are one. Schelling can say it was a matter of the originally immobile God becoming mobile. Thus,

> "When the same God who, in imperturbible identity, had maintained the unity of mankind, became himself variable and inwardly dissimilar, he must have brought about the dispersion of the human race, just as he previously held it together. In his sameness, he was the cause of its unity; in his multiplicity, he became the cause of its dispersion."[8]

In this state of crisis or becoming or transition, when peoples were in process of formation due to an emerging polytheism, language, too, existed in a fluid state. Language is "essentially a spiritual factor," separating peoples more profoundly and inwardly than anything external. Hence, "differentiation into peoples is inconceivable unless accompanied by a development of corresponding languages;" and just as mankind was one before the birth of peoples, so language must have been one.[9] There are, in fact, three processes which Schelling arranges in the order of their natural succession: the first and most inward was an alteration of consciousness; the second, more external, was the involuntary confusion of language; the third and most external was the division into peoples. And for this arrangement he finds support in the "Mosaic writings."[10] The Genesis myth of the Tower of Babel presents the formation of peoples as caused by the confusion of tongues (i.e., it explicitly cites the intermediate or immediate cause). For the myth-teller, the birth of nations was a sudden evil or misfortune or punishment; it was a *caused* event, not a natural process; it was a *judgment* and therefore a real *crisis*.[11]

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[8] p. 107

[9] pp. 102f.

[10] pp. 103 - 105

Schelling has thus descried a relationship between a crisis of the religious consciousness, the manifestations of the faculty of language and the formation of earth's peoples. Babylon and the Tower,[12] for example, symbolise the mutual unintelligibility of languages (and unintelligible speech in general) caused by emerging mythology. But Jerusalem and Pentecost were later to witness "the momentary re-establishment of unity of speech (ὁμογλωσσία)" as a result of revelation. Pentecost is "Babel reversed," says Schelling. It is the moment when Christianity begins its great career to "restore the unity of the whole human

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[11] p. 104

[12] Although Schelling recognises that theodicies and peoples do *not* all appear at the same time (p.133), he does set the scene of the "crisis" at Babylon. He suggests that unbiassed historical investigation will support the Bible in regarding the transition to polytheism and the birth of languages and peoples, as having taken place at the site of the future great city. Polytheism spread out irresistibly from this source where "the golden cup was filled which made the whole earth drunk." p. 107. Cf. Jeremiah 7:51. It seems difficult, despite this passage, to regard Schelling as a supporter of "Pan-Babylonianism." Cf. his criticism of Hermann (pp. 59-63). And see Cassirer *op*. *cit*. p.18.

Strictly speaking, says Schelling, "paganism" means "nationalism" (*Völkerthum*), and is so intimately connected with the word Babel that even the last book of the New Testament regards Babylon as a *symbol* of all that is pagan. Schelling does not derive Babel from Bab-bel (door or court of Bel) but from *balbel*, an oriental word which "imitates the stammering speech which jumbles up sounds." The onomatopoeia is preserved in the later Greek *barbaros* (barbarian), "one who speaks in an unintelligible fashion." Genesis is correct in saying: "Hence it was called Babel, because it was there that the Lord made a babble of (*verwirret*) the language of the whole earth." p. 108

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race through the recognition of the one true God." The separation into peoples is paralleled by the migration of peoples into Christianity, a migration which is more like an assembling or a reunion, than a dispersion.[13] Thus, the Tower of Babel and Pentecost represent mighty turning points in the history of religion.

The original unity of language along with the primitive unity of mankind persist after the crisis. "The language of a people stabilises itself only with the stabilisation of the people itself" but retains a connection with "the primitive unity of language which still seeks to affirm itself even after the separation."[14] Although languages later came to be organised according to completely different principles, we find certain material agreements among them which must be traced back, Schelling believes, to that formative, confused period.

> "In each emerging language, the original unity continues to be effective as is shown, partly, by the affinity between the languages. The disappearance of every element of unity would mean the disappearance of language itself, hence the disappearance of everything distinctively human; for man is man only to the extent that he is capable of a universal consciousness which transcends his individual consciousness; and language has significance only by virtue of its comprehending an element of universality. Some peoples have achieved a very high degree of humanity and of spiritual cohesion, and their languages, though few in number, are spread over vast distances. In such cases, therefore, a community of consciousness is preserved."[15]

Anxiety to preserve the consciousness of that original unity of mankind characterised the separating peoples during and after the "crisis". "They felt the destruction of the original unity had given rise to a bewildering multiplicity which could only end in the total loss of all consciousness of unity and therefore of everything distinctively human." There was a feeling of inner restlessness, of no longer being humanity entire, but only a part of it, "of belonging no longer to the unique One but of being devoted to a particular god or gods." This anxiety impelled the peoples to develop the first religious and even civil institutions.[16]

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[13] p. 111. Cf. also his Philosophy of Revelation.

[14] pp. 112f.

[15] p. 116

Had nothing been saved of the original unity, Schelling thinks mankind today would be like the primitive South American populations, "human merely in appearance" as described by Azara. Physically homogeneous, these latter have never risen to the status of nationhood (Völkerthum) but have persisted without any moral or spiritual unity among them. In the prehistoric state of which these nations were a part before the birth of peoples, there was "tribal existence" and therefore marriage and family life, contracts, personal property and the like. But there was no developed community life characterised by laws, religion, "tradition" (i.e., culture). The very crisis which brought the nations into being was the crisis to which these South American

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[16] pp. 113f. There was, for example, (i) "the formation of special communities, often strictly isolated, in which the feeling of universality, the consciousness of unity would, it was hoped, survive." An example is the division into castes, "the basis of which is as old as history and common to all peoples." (ii) "The establishment of strict priestly institutions which gathered all knowledge and set it up as doctrine" (e.g., in Egypt). (iii) The erection in prehistoric time of massive monuments (e.g., cyclopean constructions) by those who sensed the approach of the crisis. See pp. 117f.

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populations succumbed. Nor have they saved anything of the original unity of language, for Azara reported that their "languages" change from band to band, even from hut to hut, and that the very faculty of language seems to be disappearing among them. In this "confusion of idioms," "language is at that final point beyond which it would cease to be language."[17]

Just as the Tower of Babel, designed to prevent total dispersion, was in fact the beginning of and pretext for the separation into peoples,[18] so when mankind first established fixed dwelling places, division began. The stage represented in Homer by the Cyclops, though it was swallowed up in Greece by the ever more powerful movement toward separation, is still preserved in the New World.[19]

b. Mythology as "Successive Polytheism"

In his search for the true explanation of mythology, Schelling has now discovered not only that polytheism caused the separation of mankind into peoples, but that polytheism was itself preceded by "the consciousness of one general God common to the whole of mankind." He refers to this original religion as "monotheistic" but must specify the sense. Was that general God One in the sense of a revealed monotheism? Was he a mythological God or was He completely a-mythological? The answer requires a clearer understanding of the nature of polytheism which is a key issue in the religious explanation of mythology.

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[17] pp. 114 - 117

[18] The builders of the Tower of Babel say to one another: "Let us build ourselves a stronghold and a tower whose top may reach to heaven, so as to nake a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad across the whole earth" (Gen. 11:4). Up till then they were a nameless humanity. Now they want to make a name for themselves, i.e., become a people so as to avoid dispersion - for a name differentiates one people from another but it also holds a people together. p. 118

[19] pp. 119f.

Schelling distinguishes two kinds of polytheism; "simultaneous" and "successive". Simultaneous polytheism arises, he says, when a number of gods co-exist. But since many gods cannot co-exist without becoming subordinate to one of their number, this kind of polytheism merges again into a kind of monotheism. Hence it is not true polytheism. It represents the manifoldness of a single God (Göttervielheit) rather than a true plurality of gods (Vielgötterei).

True polytheism is "successive" polytheism which "accepts the existence of several gods but holds that each is master and sovereign during a certain period so that the gods can rule only successively or in turn,"[21] as did Ouranos, Chronos and Zeus in the three successive god-systems of Greece. These gods were not contemporaries but succeeded one another in time, mutually excluding one another. This is Vielgötterei, a true plurality. It goes beyond and includes all simultaneous polytheism and yet remains absolute and free. Vielgötterei is the enigma. How is it to be understood?[22]

The simple disintegration of a Unity, as proposed by Creuzer, could have produced, at best, "only a simultaneous polytheism, a mere stationary juxtaposition, an unexciting

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[20] Lecture 6, pp. 122-128 [21] p. 122 [22] p. 124

uniformity, and never that living mythology, so richly articulated, so full of movement, so polyphonic, as the phenomenon we know as successive polytheism."[23] A comparison of the various mythologies, however, makes it clear that "what mythology preserves in the succession of its gods is the actual history of the emergence of these gods." Now the investigation rests on historical ground.

> "Mythology is precisely the totality of those theodicies which actually succeeded one another, and is therefore the product of that succession...
> Mythology is not composed of theodicies which are merely represented as successive. A struggle between successive gods, such as we find described in the Theogony, would never have been found among the mythological representations unless it had actually occurred in the consciousness of the peoples who preserve the knowledge of it, and to that extent in the consciousness of mankind of which every people is a part. Successive polytheism can be explained only if we assume that the consciousness of humanity has actually lingered over each successive stage and been really affected by every moment one after the other. The gods which succeed one another have really in turn taken possession of consciousness. Mythology as history of the gods, i.e., mythology in the proper sense of the word, could have arisen only out of life itself; it must have been something known and experienced."[24]

We should note that when Schelling says mythology has "no reality outside of consciousness," he means simply that the movement and development of successive polytheism takes place in the human consciousness and not that the gods have no existence outside the mind of man. He will later insist that his recognition of the human consciousness as "the true seat, the real generative principle of mythological ideas" is "an attempt to win objectivity for the mythological representations"[25] and he will proceed to demonstrate that successive polytheism must correspond to an objective process.

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[23] p. 125 [24] p. 127 [25] pp. 201, 204

c. The "Relative Monotheism" of Pre-history

In the light of this understanding of mythology as successive polytheism, we may look again at that Urgott who was common to all mankind.

Let us think, suggests Schelling, of the first God (A)[26] who appeared in consciousness. At that time humanity is unaware that A will soon be followed by B, and B by C, etc. Hence in this initial stage A appears as the simple unconditioned One, before, alongside and after whom, there is no other. Polytheism (Vielgötterei) does not yet exist, so what we have is truly monotheism, if this is understood simply as the opposite of Vielgötterei. But it is clear that though this monotheism was absolute for the humanity over which it ruled, it is in itself and for us only relative. The god A is completely un-mythological so long as nothing is known of any second God. A mythological god is one who is a member of a historical succession (as we have just seen), and "in any sequence (A,B,C, etc.) A becomes a member only when it has been actually followed by B." "The God A is not yet a member of such a series, but he is not therefore un-mythological by nature even though he can appear to be such so long as the other God who will strip him of his absolute character has not made his appearance."[27]

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[26] Or God-system in the sense of Göttervielheit. See pp.128f.

[27] p. 129

This "relative monotheism" followed by "successive polytheism" now appears to Schelling to be the only possible explanation of the original coherence and the subsequent separation of mankind:

> "If successive polytheism was a real event in the life of mankind, i.e., if humanity actually passed through such a succession of gods as we suppose - and we here remember that this is a fact as indisputable as any attested by history - there must have been, at some time or other in the history of mankind, such a first God as our God A who was only the first element of a future succession although he actually appeared at the time as the unconditioned-One and therefore spread over the world the peace and calm of his undivided and unopposed rule. From the moment the other God announced his presence, however, this peace could not endure, for, as we have shown, confusion and separation were inevitably involved in the appearance of this second God. If, then, we wish to specify the time when there was still room for a first God, it is clear that we cannot assign him to the period when the separation had been accomplished, and that we cannot find him a place in the transitional period either, not even at the beginning of the separation. He is to be sought only in the prehistoric period.
>
> "Thus, one of two things must hold good: either a first God such as our God A never existed at all, which amounts to denying that there was ever a real succession like that which we feel compelled to recognise in polytheism proper, or else this God really did rule the consciousness of primitive mankind before the separation began.
>
> "Also involved here is the contrary conclusion, that the one God, who reigned during the calm, pre-historic period, was indeed the only one who existed up till then, not in the sense that he could not be followed by a second, but only because another God had not yet actually succeeded him. Essentially (potentia), therefore, he was already a mythological God, but he would be actually (actu) a mythological God only when the second God really appeared and made himself master of human consciousness."[28]

Once the second principle began to influence mankind, i.e., once the first form of God was posited, "the subsequent forms were posited at the same time, albeit as more or less remote possibilities."[29] To the various forms of God correspond the materially differing theodicies, and to the various theodicies correspond the different peoples, so that all these "exist in the potential state from the moment of the appearance of the second cause." These divine forms, theodicies and peoples do not all emerge into real life at the same time. Thanks to the successive character of polytheism, they appear in history successively, when their particular moment has come, i.e., "when permitted to do so by the God who in unceasing struggle still keeps mankind in his power." Peoples destined to appear late on the scene pass through all the moments but as part of homogeneous humanity, not as actual peoples, for "only in this way is it possible for the moments, distributed among various peoples, to be united in the consciousness of the last."[30]

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[28] pp. 138f.

In the light of these insights, Schelling feels, the parallelism between linguistic and religious evolution becomes more intelligible.[31] Language must have been preserved in that prehistoric period in an original stage of substantiality (i.e., "nothing but roots") until a second principle appeared and began to produce formal as well as material differences within it.

> "Mankind advanced from relative monotheism or Unitheism (Eingötterei) through Ditheism (Zweigötterei) to Polytheism (Vielgötterei). But the same advance characterised the principles of languages which proceed from original monosyllabism through disyllabism to completely unfettered polysyllabism."[32]

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[29] p. 132 [30] p. 133 [31] pp. 134-138

[32] p. 135. Cf. The Philosophy of Mythology

A new critique of earlier theories now becomes possible. Clearly, there is no need to posit an original absolute monotheism in which God is unconditionally One, excluding the possibility of any other gods. The theory of such a spiritual (doctrinal) monotheism prior to polytheism is religiously, philosophically and historically unjustifiable. In the first place, "the primitive unity of the human race was held together far more decisively by a blind power, independent of human thought and human volition" than by a pure doctrine. Secondly, "the higher the pre-mythological consciousness is placed, the less intelligible becomes the purpose of its degradation, for this transformation could lead only to a more wretched state," as Creuzer, advocate of this view, concedes. Thirdly, the theory cites only negative causes for the rise of mythology. "An obscuring, a gradual obliteration of an original knowledge" might explain how an original doctrine is misunderstood or forgotten, but only a positive cause, truly destructive of the original unity, could account for the terror which seized mankind at the first approach of polytheism.[33] As interpreted by Schelling, polytheism is a divinely-ordained judgment, "decreed against mankind in order to destroy not the truly-One but the relatively-One," the Urgott of relative monotheism. Hence it represents an advance, a mediation of a higher knowledge, a transition toward a greater enfranchisement of the human spirit.

> "In spite of appearances to the contrary, and however little it be conceivable from the present point of view, polytheism was truly a transition toward something better,

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[33] pp. 139-141

> toward the liberation of mankind from a power (Gewalt) beneficent in itself, but oppressive of human liberty, a power which suppressed all development, including attainment of the highest knowledge.[34]

It is also now obvious that the concept of revelation cannot be extended to the original relation between man and God. Those who claim the priority of revelation should try to trace it back not simply to the first man but to the first condition of man, i.e., his condition before the Fall. In that initial condition, man either did or did not have a consciousness of God. If he could acquire it only through revelation, then orthodox theologians must affirm "an original atheism of the human consciousness," a conclusion which contradicts their view that man, at the very beginning was the recipient of an original revelation of God. The only alternative is for orthodoxy to admit that in the beginning man had an essential relationship to God; that he was later placed outside that original state (= hunted out of Paradise through his own fault); that this ejection means that God and man had become different, that "there was an alteration in the religious consciousness," and that man was now related no longer to the total divinity but merely to one part ("Look, man is become as one of us Elohim."); and that this state corresponds to what Schelling has called "relative monotheism."[35]

d. Confirmation from the Hebrew Scriptures

The last paragraph is a foretaste of what we find in

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[34] p. 141

[35] pp. 143-145, Cf. pp. 178 & 191f.

Lecture seven.[36] Here Schelling's unusual exegesis of the Old Testament produces confirmation of his general view. We should notice first, however, that Schelling is very explicit about the mythical character of the early stories in Genesis, the legendary aspects of the tales of the Patriarchs, and the varying degrees of inspiration in the Hebrew Scriptures. He writes:

> "In spite of the homogeneity of the whole, there is no mistaking the fact that in the various parts and passages of the Old Testament, there are quite different degrees of inspiration."
>
> "The attempt to treat all the stories, especially of Genesis, as myth, was condemned as sacrilegious. Nevertheless, they obviously are mythical, not, to be sure, in the commonly accepted sense of the word, (i.e., fables), but in the sense that they deal with facts which are real but mythological, that is to say, facts which _are_ _such_ under mythological conditions."[37]

Now, for Schelling, the Hebrew Scriptures distinguish an initial relative monotheism and a later absolute monotheism. In a systematic way, they use "Elohim," the original Semitic name for the primitive God, to designate the first, relatively-One God, the immediate content of consciousness, and the name "Jehovah" to designate the second God, the true God as such, the revealed God of absolute monotheism.[38] Similarly, they distinguish a first generation or "age" of men (_Menschengeschlecht_) indicated by the names Adam and Seth, and a second indicated by Enosh. It is said of Seth, but not of his son Enosh, that he was begotten in the likeness of Adam. Like "Adam", "Enosh" means "man", but "enfeebled" man. And the reason for this "weakness" is that the second God (B), i.e., polytheism, begins to appear in the time of Enosh-man.

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[36] Lecture 7, pp. 146-176 [37] pp. 144, 173, Cf. 159

[38] pp. 147, 165. Of course Schelling adds that Elohim _is_ Jehovah and Jehovah Elohim. He sets aside the suggestion that this alternation of the divine names indicates a plurality of sources behind the Pentateuch.

> "Before Enosh there was no monotheism in the sense of knowledge of the true God... The true God was known as such only by a second generation which differed from the first in being already affected, seized by and subject to a power (Potenz) foreign to the first. This strange power can be only our second God (B), the one we have come to know as the first effective cause of polytheism. Hence true monotheism does not arise without the danger of polytheism being present and the God who is relatively One is the pre-condition from which monotheism as well as polytheism arise."[39]

And again,

> "The first generation worshiped the true God implicitly (implicite) that is, in the relative-One, but without distinguishing him as such. But revelation is precisely manifestation of the true God as such, for whom there was no receptiveness within the first age of man (Menschengeschlecht) for the simple reason that there was no felt need to make the distinction in question. It was said of the second generation that it called upon the true God by name; in other words, it was the first to distinguish him as such, and in doing so, it created the possibility of a revelation, but not before the first appearance of polytheism. The most commanding figure is Noah, with whom the true God communicates directly; but it is precisely in the time of Noah that polytheism can be held back no longer, and the Deluge signifies only the transition from the age when polytheism (Vielgötterei) could still be contained to that period when polytheism broke forth irresistibly and poured out upon mankind."[40]

The Flood thus marks the irresistible emergence of polytheism. It is said to have occurred because "man's wickedness was great in the earth," which Schelling regards as a reference to the ever stronger tendency toward polytheism.[41] Noah was saved because he did not incline toward the second God; he resisted polytheism; he was a man who changes not,[42] and found grace in the eyes of the true God. Men were not exterminated because God perceives that the human race, if it is to exist at all, cannot be prevented[43] from making the transition to polytheism. Before the Flood, i.e., before polytheism, men lived nomadic lives. After the Flood they became agriculturalists, settled in cities, differentiated into peoples and fell into polytheism. Thus,

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[39] pp. 148, 150f. Cf. Gen. 4:25. [40] p. 162

[41] p. 152. Gen. 6:5. Cf. Deut. 31:19-21, I Chron. 29:9.

> "The Noachic Deluge - even if it is regarded as, after all, a physical event - was simply the natural sign of the great turning point of mythology and one which was followed inexorably by the confusion of languages, the transition to polytheism with its different theodicies and the division of mankind into peoples and states. The embryonic beginnings of these events must have existed before the time of the Flood, since it is true that in the first centuries after the Deluge Anterior-Asia possessed a heavy population of men who were no longer merely nomads but were associated in states, Babylon had a Kingdom even in Abraham's time, the Phoenicians were engaged in commerce on the Meditteranean coasts, Egypt was a monarchic state with the attendant institutions, and every one of these peoples had elaborated a more or less developed mythology."[44]

e. Abraham's Monotheism and the Religion of the Future.

The preceding views raise the question: "Where is monotheism to be found?" And Schelling believes the Biblical answer is: among the descendents of Abraham. True religion and revelation were preserved not in mankind as such, nor in some particular people, but among a non-people, the Abrahamites, who for a long time escaped the evolutionary process which swept mankind toward nation-hood.[45] These Abrahamites, descended from Noah through Seth, represent "pure humanity" as opposed to "peoples" and their devotion to the One universal God is intimately connected with the nomadic life. "It is precisely the fact that they are not particularised which becomes their particularity."[46] They regarded polytheism as inseparably associated with nationhood, and continued to do so even after they themselves became a nation. (Even the New Testament refers to the pagans as peoples, *ἐθνη*). But the name "Hebrews" signifies a "non-people." During Abraham's struggles against the kings of the nations, he was for the first time, and in contrast to the kings, called Haibri (the Ibri), i.e., "one who travels through," a nomad.[47] And in Canaan he was called a stranger, a wanderer, hence, a non-people.[48]

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[42] p. 154, Gen. 7:1. Schelling uses Luther's felicitous translation: ein Mann ohne Wandel.

[43] Gen. 8:21, Cf. 6:5

[44] p. 155.

Abraham's absolute monotheism was continuous with the relative monotheism of primitive times. "Jehovah is simply the *Urgott* in his true and permanent essence."[49] Genesis consistently speaks of Jehovah (never Elohim) as having appeared to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,[50] and these Patriarchs, in important moments, call Jehovah by name.[51] Hence, since Jehovah is simply invoked and since He merely appears, the direct content of their consciousness must be Elohim.

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[45] pp. 158-162 [46] pp. 157f. [47] p. 159. See Gen. 17:8, 12:6, 37:28, II Kgs. 4:8f.

[48] See Gen. 17:8, 35:27, 37:1; Gen. 47:9. And Cf. p. 160 where Schelling discusses the Hebrews' request for "a king *such as the nations have* " (I Sam. 8:5). Consider one of Schelling's examples of this distinction between peoples and non-peoples. He cites "the Alamans who invaded Gaul and Italy in the time of Caracalla (272-282 A.D.) They were the part of the Germanic hordes which had not crystallised as a people. They had a passion for the free individual life and hated cities, regarding them as tombs in which men interred themselves alive. By contrast, the Deutschen (= *Thiod'schen*, where *Thiod* = *Volk*) are simply the Germans (*Germanen*) who have already particularised and segregated themselves as a people." p. 161.

[49] p. 170.

Elohim is the natural or ever-present God. He appears in dreams to Abimelech, king of Gerar, and to Laban the Syrian, and the peoples (the heathen) in general still fear him. (Gen. 20:6, 31:24; 20:11). He ordains the ancient rite of circumcision, and commands Abraham to sacrifice his son (a heathen burnt offering), but it is Jehovah who appears and prevents the sacrifice. In the story of original sin, the two names are found together, but only when the story-teller, not when the wife or the serpent are speaking. If Adam had spoken, he would have used Elohim, for he knew nothing of Jehovah.[52] The very name, Elohim, while plural in form, has both singular and plural usages. Its singular meaning - its use as a plural of greatness not of many-ness - is applicable beyond all question to the primal Allgott. But so is its plural meaning in such cases as "let us make man in our image" and "let us go down and let us throw their speech into disorder," for in the first case the God who is simply One is without form, and in the second case, "God must pluralise himself in order to divide up mankind." Hence, as Jehovah, God is always one, but as Elohim, he is the one who is

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[50] p. 163. See Gen. 12:7, 17:1, 18:1, 26:2, 28:12

[51] See Gen. 12:8, 13:4, 21:33, 26:25

[52] pp. 165f.

"exposed to entreaties to pluralise himself."[53]

> "The same power (Potenz) which caused a part of mankind to turn to polytheism, raised one elect generation toward true religion. When the true God, who in the earliest time was unconsciously worshiped in the relative-One, appeared to Abraham, i.e., when He became known and discernible to Abraham, the latter turned toward him consciously and voluntarily...and detained Him... and God draws Abraham to Himself and enters into a special relationship with him through which Abraham is entirely separated from the peoples. Since there is no knowledge of the true God unless He is differentiated as such, it follows that His name is very important. The worshippers of the true God are those who know His name; the heathen do not know His name. To be sure, the heathen are not unaware of God in a general way (i.e., they are not ignorant as to His substance), but they are unaware of His name, which means they have no way of singling Him out.
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> "But even after having seen the true God...the immediate content of Abraham's consciousness remains the God of the primitive period who did not become for him and hence is not revealed to him, but is...his natural God. For the true God to appear to Abraham, the first God must provide the ground and basis for His appearance, and only on this basis will the new revelation assume the character of permanence...The true God is mediated to him through the natural God not merely temporarily but constantly. Thus, for Abraham, the true God is never the One who is but always the One who becomes. This alone is sufficient to explain the name Jehovah which expresses perfectly the notion of becoming. The religion of Abraham does not, therefore, consist in the abandonment of that God of ancient times. It is not Abraham, but the heathen who are unfaithful in this respect."[54]

It is clear, then, that Abraham's monotheism is not absolutely a-mythological, for it had as its antecedent and precondition the relatively-One who was also the pre-condition, the first power (Potenz), of polytheism. The manner of the true God's appearance is mythological in the sense that "that which is polytheistic always intervenes."[55] That the true God is inseparable from the primitive God is indicated by Jehovah's attributes. He is, firstly, El Olam, "the first, immemorial God without predecessor," the "eternal" (but not in a metaphysical sense), the one who existed "not since but in that time in which peoples did not yet exist," in contrast with the Elohim chadaschim, the new gods of recent birth.[56] Secondly, Jehovah is, for Abraham, the true God of Heaven (Sky) and Earth (Cf. Gen. 24:3), for it is as such that the God who was common to the whole human race was once worshiped.[57] Thirdly, Jehovah is El Shaddai,[58] "strong of the strong," "the God whose strength and power is over all;" and he appeared to the patriarchs as, in and through this intermediary. Jehovah says to Abraham: "I am El Shaddai" (Gen. 17:1). But Elohim says to Moses: "I am Jehovah...I appeared to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in El Shaddai, and by my name Jehovah I was not known to them." Hence, for Schelling, the name Jehovah was first taught by Moses to whom, on other grounds, he ascribes a knowledge of Jehovah independently of El Shaddai.

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[53] p. 164

[54] pp. 166f.

[55] p. 173. Cf. Gen. 22:1 with 22:12 and 22:15f.

This pure monotheism, then, was not Abraham's actual religion (which still depended on polytheism) but the religion of the future. The true God, for Abraham, was the One who now appears but who one day will be, and such is his name.[59] Later, to Moses, God says that His name is: "I will be who I will be."[60] Perhaps the first meaning of Jehovah was "the One who Becomes," but after this declaration made to Moses it becomes the name of the Future One, "the One who now is merely Becoming but who, one day, Will Be." Hence, both Abraham and Moses receive promises from Jehovah.[61]

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[56] pp. 167f. Deut 32:17. Cf. the phrase me Olam in Jer. 5:15 and Josh. 24:2.

[57] See pp. 169f where Schelling views the rise of Islam as a restoration of the old primitive religion.

[58] pp. 170 - 172.

> "To Abraham, who is not yet a people, the promise is given that he will become a great and powerful people; indeed, all peoples of the earth shall be blest in him, for in him lies the future of that monotheism through which all the peoples, who are now divided and dispersed, will one day be united again."[62]

Abraham is therefore a prophet of the future religion. And similarly the religious law of Moses is full of the future, for "it is nothing but relative monotheism affirming itself against encompassing paganism." Moses saw the Lord "as He is,"[63] but the people were brought under the yoke of the Law, the function of which was to preserve the basis or ground of the future religion.[64]

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[59] p. 173. Hence he is called "the father of all the faithful" by Jew and Oriental alike, p. 179.

[60] p. 173. [A.V. has "I am that I am." Moffat has "I will be what I will be." R.S.V. has "I am who I am."] Schelling notes that the true pronunciation of YHWH is unknown (since the vowels of Adonai were early substituted), but that grammatically it can be only the archaic future of hawa (later hajah) "to be".

[61] p. 174. Schelling refuses to see these promises as mere fictions of later Jewish national pride.

[62] p. 174. See Gen. 18:18f, 26:4. Cf. Gen. 15:6.

[63] p. 175. See Num. 12:8. Cf. Ex. 33:11, Deut. 34:10.

Meanwhile, the true principle of this religion of the future was transferred to prophetism, "that other aspect of the Hebraic religious consciousness, supplementary but no less peculiar and essential."[65] The prophets believe this future liberating religion, their chief hope and expectation, will be the religion not merely of Israel but of all peoples.

> "They extend the feeling of negation, from which they themselves suffer, to the whole of humanity and begin to glimpse the future even in and through paganism...
> "Those who worship the true God, that is, God in his truth, can worship him, as Christ says, only in spirit (im Geist). This presupposes a relationship based on freedom, whereas the relation to God outside his truth like that which exists in polytheism and mythology can only be a non-free relation."[66]

Hence, in the Old Testament, as among all peoples, there is a waiting for deliverance, and this comes in Christ:

> "They await freedom from the law and from the necessity to which not only the Israelites but the whole human race were subjected. On the day of deliverance, the true God will cease to be merely the one who appears, the one who reveals himself...revelation will come to an end. And this actually happened in Christ, for Christ is the End (Ende) of revelation."[67]

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[64] p. 176. "As mythology advances, as relative monotheism enters into a struggle with thorough-going polytheism, as Chronos' dominion over the peoples is extended, the relative God, who is the ground of the absolute God, must impose himself on the people of the true God with increasing strictness, defending his prerogatives with ever greater energy, and becoming ever more jealous of his Oneness. This characteristic exclusiveness, this most uncompromising negative unity, can be due only to the relative-One, for the true, the absolute God, is not One in this exclusive way and is threatened by nothing since he excludes nothing." p. 175.

[65] p. 176

[66] pp. 176, 178

[67] p. 180

CHAPTER FOUR

THE OBJECTIVE RELIGIOUS EXPLANATION OF MYTHOLOGY*

a. Four Stages in Man's Religious Development

We can assign no historical beginning to polytheism if, as Schelling has shown, mythology is potentially present in the first real human consciousness. "The emergence of polytheism is as old as mankind."[1] Again, if man's first religion was this relative monotheism, it follows that mythology and revelation do not presuppose or precede either the other, but have a common origin.[2] Thus, the story of man's religious development does not begin with the fragmentation of some prior religious doctrine or with a primitive deification of nature - "a phenomena found among wretched hordes and degenerate tribes but never among peoples" - but with "relative monotheism."

> "The religious development of mankind (did not begin) with the multiplicity of partial, or even, initially, local representations, with so-called fetishism or shamanism or a deification of Nature which turned into gods not even concepts or kinds but particular natural objects, e.g., this tree or this river. No, mankind did not start from such wretchedness. The majestic course of history had quite a different beginning. The dominant tone in the consciousness of mankind was always that great One who did not yet know his equals and who actually filled heaven and earth, i.e., the whole universe."[3]

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*Lectures 8-10, pp. 177-254

[1] p. 180. Schelling agrees with David Hume that "as far back as we go in history, we find polytheism," but regrets "the vagueness and imprecision of Hume's exposition, for the preconceived ideas of Hume as philosopher have been prejudicial to the precision and exactitude of Hume as historian." pp. 184f.

[2] p. 181. It appears likely to Schelling, however, that mythology alone is capable of throwing light on that "extraordinary state of consciousness" which revelation presupposes, p. 182.

[3] p. 180.

But how are we to account for that "relative monotheism"? The first potentially mythological consciousness cannot be the product of a historical becoming (it is as old as history), and yet it must be the product of a becoming! We must posit, then, a supra-historical process.

> "Wherever there is a relationship between consciousness and God, its ground cannot be found in the first real consciousness, but must lie beyond it. Beyond the first real consciousness, however, nothing is conceivable other than man, or consciousness in its pure substance prior to all actual consciousness. In this state man has no consciousness of himself (for self-consciousness is inconceivable where there is no process of becoming conscious, no Actus), but since he must have consciousness of something, it can only be of God. And since this consciousness of God is not the result of an Actus, that is to say, for example, since it is not associated with a knowing or willing, it is pure substantial consciousness of God. Primitive man posits God not actu, but natura sua. Indeed, since God conceived in a general way is an abstraction, while the relative-One already belongs to real consciousness, nothing remains but to characterise the Original consciousness as that which posits God in his truth and absolute unity... it is in this way that monotheism would be the final presupposition of mythology. But as you can now well see, this monotheism is in the first place a supra-historical monotheism, and in the second place it is a monotheism which emanates from human nature and not a monotheism of the human reason, for MAN IN HIS ORIGINAL ESSENCE has no other significance than to be the being-who-posits-God (Gott-setzende-Natur)."[4]

Schelling thus leads us back from the individual to the nation (Volk) and from the nation to mankind, and now to original man himself (zum ursprünglichen Menschen selbst), "for he alone can be conceived as existing in relationship with the supra-historical."[5] Man in his original and essential nature is revealed as the being who posits God.

> "He originally exists only in order to be the being-which-posits-God (Gott-setzende-Wesen). Hence his nature does

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[4] p. 187. Cf. pp. 194f.

[5] p. 186

> not exist for itself, but is oriented toward God, absorbed, so to speak, in God. I gladly make a general use of the most appropriate and significant expressions, without fear of having my theory called fanciful; for it is not a theory which describes man as he now is or even as he could be, once he has passed through the whole great eventful history which separates his present existence from his original state. To be sure, the theory would be fantastic if it asserted that man exists (Ist) only to posit God, and if it asserted, despite man's tremendous step into reality, that this direct positing of God is to be made the exclusive rule of his present life, as has happened in the lives of contemplatives like the Hindu yogis or the Persian sufis. Such contemplatives, inwardly tortured by the contradictions of their religious beliefs and tired of the mutability of existence and thought, strive, to all intents and purposes, to sink back into that state of absorption in God. They are therefore like the mystics of every age who find only the way backward, not the way forward into free knowledge."[6]

There is no point, then, in asking how man arrived at God, for the first movement of consciousness is away from the true God. In the first actual consciousness of God there is only a moment of God - i.e., the relative One - not God himself. But prior to this state, consciousness possesses God as such.

> "We use this latter expression in the same sense that we have in mind when we say of a man that he has a virtue or, more often, a non-virtue as such, meaning that it is not objective to him but that he has it without wanting it and even without knowing that he has it. Man (i.e., original man, man in his essence) is the one who exists as himself and, so to speak, before himself, i.e., before he possesses himself, which is to say, before he has become something other (for he is already another when, returning to himself, he becomes an object to himself.)
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> "As soon as man is, and before he has become anything, he is consciousness of God. He does not possess this consciousness, he is it; and it is precisely in the non-act (Nichtactus), it is precisely by the non-movement, that he is the one who posits the true God."[7]

This original essential relation to God may be called monotheism, says Schelling, but it is a blind or natural monotheism, resting on an absorption of human nature in the divine, hence an essential or natural theism. "We are not using monotheism (i) in the formal sense in which the true God is distinguished as such, or (ii) in the abstract sense which simply excludes polytheism, for indeed it still has polytheism in itself at this stage." This "suprahistorical monotheism" or natural theism simply represents the common antecedent and equal possibility of both polytheism and the future, formal monotheism which rests on real knowledge.[8]

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[6] p. 188

[7] pp. 188f.

We may now attempt to summarise these four stages in the history of man's relationship to God, for these stages represent the conclusions to which Schelling's "ascending inquiry" has thus far led us.

(1) In the beginning there is an original, blind, essential or natural theism in which man posits God not by virtue of a knowing or a willing but natura sua. Schelling cannot conceive man as maintaining this relation to the pure divine Ipseity: "man cannot persist in this being-outside-himself." He must strive to disengage himself from such absorption in God so as to transform it into a knowing, a knowledge of God, hence into a relationship with God that is based on freedom. But this can be achieved only step by step.

(2) The second stage is that of a formed, relative monotheism, for the first real or actual consciousness of mankind

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[8] pp. 189 - 191.

contains God under a definite form of existence - the God of Power, the Strong One, the Hebrews' El Shaddai, the God of Heaven and Earth. "This relatively-One is not yet in contradiction with the Absolute-One but exists for consciousness as if it were the latter." In him, without knowing it, humanity still worshiped the absolute One. With this first form of God, the other forms are given potentially.[9]

(3) Actual polytheism now ensues, and is simply "the way which leads to liberation from this one-sided power, an advance toward the establishment of new relations."

(4) The fourth phase is that of true monotheism, knowledge of the true God as such, a free relation. Polytheism is not the product of a knowing, but God in his truth is such that man can relate to him only in terms of knowing. (To God in his pure reality even a blind or unknowing relationship is possible).

> "If his original relationship to God is set aside, man's relation to God in general does not cease, for this relation is an eternal, imperishable one. Having become real himself, man submits to God in his reality. If we assume - the proposition has not yet been demonstrated philosophically, of course, but has been demonstrated factually by our explanation of successive polytheism - if we assume that God with respect to his forms of existence (modes of being) is several just as he is one with respect to his divine ipseity or essence, we can immediately see whereon rests the successive character of polytheism, and what the goal of the latter is. None of those forms, taken separately, is equal to God, but if they come to a state of unity in consciousness, then this emerging unity, this God who has come to be, gives rise to a known and consciously realised monotheism."[10]

b. The Theogonic Process

Now it is only in the light of these conclusions, believes

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[9] p. 192

[10] pp. 191f.

Schelling, that mythology can become intelligible. Of course, it has not been really explained as yet. Schelling has merely eliminated all more or less arbitrary assumptions and explanatory hypotheses by demonstrating their unhistorical character. "But where the arbitrary assumptions and hypotheses end, science begins." And for the science of mythology, Schelling needs to assume only two things: (a) a blind theism of the original consciousness to serve as starting point, and (b) the movement by which man, his relationship to the divine ipseity at an end, came under the sway of the real God (i.e., exposed himself to that determination by virtue of which he became subject to the mythological succession). These assumptions, however, belong not to the historical but to the supra-historical order, and completely transform the mode of explanation of mythology.[11] They imply rejection of every hypothesis which attributes to mythology an arbitrary birth, and require us to conceive mythology as the product of a necessary process - necessary with respect to consciousness - whose origin is lost in the suprahistorical and remains hidden there.

> "Since the ground of mythology is already present in the first actual consciousness, polytheism, in its essence, arose during the period of transition to that consciousness. It follows, therefore, that the Act by which the ground of polytheism was posited did not take place within that consciousness, but occurred outside it... This determination is, therefore, incomprehensible to consciousness. It is the unwilled and unforeseen consequence of a movement which consciousness cannot reverse or revoke. Its origin is in a region to which consciousness, once separated from it, no longer has access...

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[11] p. 193

> "This relative God is followed by a second, not as a result of chance, but by virtue of an objective necessity which we do not yet comprehend, of course, but which we are nevertheless obliged to recognise in advance as objective. Hence with that first determination consciousness is subjected to the necessary succession of representations by which true polytheism arises. When the first attachment is posited, the movement of consciousness through these successive forms is one in which thought and volition, understanding and freedom, take no part whatever... Consciousness accepts it as a fate, as a divine decree(destiny) against which it is powerless... Prior to all thought, consciousness is already captive to that principle of which polytheism and mythology are the purely natural consequence...
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> "Both peoples and individuals are mere instruments in this process; they cannot transcend it, and serve it without understanding it... The representations do not come to them from outside; they are in them without them knowing how or why, for they come out of the depths of consciousness itself, and present themselves to consciousness with a necessity which leaves no doubt as to their truth."[12]

In the light of these conclusions we may take a new look at the question of the meaning of mythology, for if the mythological representations were neither invented nor freely chosen then they could not have been meant to signify anything! Hence all allegorical interpretation has completely missed the point. Mythology remains enigmatic to the outsider, but "for those to whom the inner process is no secret, it has an entirely comprehensible and rational meaning." The meaning of mythology can only be the meaning of the process by which it was brought into existence. But since this process is a natural and necessary one, "no distinction can be made in it between content and form, substance and external appearance,"[13] and the "organic becoming" of mythology, postulated earlier, is finally intelligible in the light of this principle of process.

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[12] pp. 194, 195, 196

[13] p. 197

> "Since consciousness chooses or invents neither the representations themselves nor their expression, mythology arises just as such and possesses no other meaning than the one expressed. As a result of the necessity with which the content of the representations is produced, mythology possesses from the very beginning a real and therefore a doctrinal meaning. As a result of the necessity with which the form arises, its meaning is completely literal (durchaus eigentlich), i.e., everything in it is to be understood just as it is stated, and we are not to look for implicit or disguised meanings. Mythology is not allegorical, it is tautegorical (the term is borrowed from Coleridge). For mythology, the gods are beings who really exist. They are not something else, and they do not mean something else. They mean only what they are. Formerly, literal meaning and doctrinal meaning were opposed, but according to our explanation these two cannot be separated. Hence, instead of sacrificing the literal meaning to some doctrinal meaning or other, or of saving the literal meaning at the expense of the doctrinal meaning (as the poetic interpretation does), we are obliged, in the light of our explanation, to affirm the absolute unity and inseparability of both."[14]

Tautegorical interpretation must therefore replace poetic and allegorical interpretation; and the absolutely literal meaning of mythological representations must be maintained with respect to both the polytheistic and the historical aspects of mythology. In other words, mythology deals with real gods from the very beginning of mankind's self awareness, and the succession of gods - who had God as their final ground and content - is a movement which truly takes place in consciousness.[15] The most bizarre and preposterous aspects in the history of the gods, as well as the solemn and very often cruel sacrifices offered to the gods by ancient man, become intelligible to us only when

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[14] p. 198

[15] pp. 198-200

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interpreted literally. No distinction can be established between Doctrine and History. The latter is not merely a cloak for the former. "Doctrine is not external to history, but history itself is doctrine; and inversely, the doctrinal aspect of mythology is contained precisely in the historical aspect."[16]

Subjectively considered - i.e., viewed from the point of view of its formation - mythology is a real theogonic process. Since the original relation between consciousness and God is a natural and essential one, "consciousness cannot disengage itself therefrom without being led back into it by means of a process." In returning, however, it "cannot avoid giving the impression that it is positing God anew, but this time in a mediate way, i.e., through a process; in other words, it cannot help appearing as the consciousness which gives birth to God, hence as a theogonic consciousness."

Objectively considered, mythology is what it claims to be: "a real theogony, a real history of the gods. But since only those gods are real who have God as their ground, it follows that the final content of the history of the gods is that of the generation, (the birth, the bringing forth) of God, a real becoming of God, in consciousness." The gods are related to God simply as individual moments are related to the whole which they are producing.[17]

c. The objective and universal meaning of the process.[18]

This whole introduction has been conducted from the

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[16] p. 200 [17] p. 200

[18] See Lecture 9, pp. 200-218.

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historical-critical or dialectical point of view because of the intrinsic value of an exhaustive, impartial and accurate review of all possibilities. It has led Schelling to the conclusion - for which he takes personal credit - that the subjectum agens of mythology is to be sought in the human consciousness, and that "mythology in general arises by means of a theogonic process... in which the human consciousness is seized and held fast by its own nature."[19]

> "There can be no doubt that a very important step was taken towards the philosophical examination of mythology in general when we placed its origin in the inner life of primitive mankind, no longer considering poets or cosmogonic philosophers or adherents of some historically antecedent religious doctrine as creators of mythology, but recognising the human consciousness itself as the true seat, the real generative principle of mythological ideas."[20]

But it is time now to consider the objective meaning of this process, for even though the representations engendered in mankind by the theogonic process have a subjective necessity and truth for those who are seized and affected by them, it is possible that they are objectively false and arbitrary. Schelling notes that his explanation of mythology has gone back to a supra-historical process, and this brings to mind the "very ancient view" which traces paganism as well as all corruption in man back to a primeval Fall.

> "This deduction can sometimes assume a moralistic character, sometimes a pietistic or mystical one. But whatever be its form, it is a view which deserves recognition for the sake of its insight that mythology cannot be explained unless we recognise a real displacement of man from his original condition. In its simplest form (it holds)... that man, who falls through original sin down into the sphere of attraction of nature, and who sinks ever deeper into it,

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[19] p. 206, Cf. p. 221 [20] p. 201

> ends up by confounding the creature with the Creator, Who ceases to be one for man and becomes many."[21]

But Schelling is opposed to the arbitrary introduction of "things" into this explanation. Myth has no relation to the "things" of naive realism. It represents solely a reality, a potency of the *spirit*. "The process requires the intervention of no factor outside of consciousness and the principles which posit and constitute consciousness."

> "In the mythological process, man is not dealing with things at all, but with *powers that rise up in the depths of consciousness* - powers by which consciousness is moved. The theogonic process which gives birth to mythology is a *subjective* process for as much as it unfolds in *consciousness* and manifests itself in the formation of representations. But the causes and, therefore, also the objects of these representations, are the real theogonic powers *as such*, the very powers under whose influence consciousness is originally that-which-posits-God. It is not the mere *representations* of the potencies but the *potencies themselves* which form the content of the process. These potencies create consciousness and, since consciousness is the end of Nature, they create Nature. Therefore they are real powers. The mythological process has nothing to do with natural *objects* but (is accomplished under the action of) the pure creative potencies whose original product is consciousness itself."[22]

Thus Schelling, by holding that the mythological process pre-supposes a *real* Fall, an *actual estrangement* from the divine Self,[214] occasioned by the action of *real theogonic powers*, breaks through into "objectivity." All arbitrary and "subjective" explanations - religious as well as non-religious - are now set aside and the objective religious explanation of mythology exalted as "the one which alone is finally triumphant."

> "The mythological process which results from the action of the theogonic powers has a meaning which is not merely religious but *objectively religious*, for it is the action of powers-which-posit-God which is operative in the

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[21] p. 207 . [22] p. 209 .

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mythological process...

> "In this process the powers appear as a succession only in order to produce and re-establish the (lost) unity. Thus the *meaning of the process* lies not in a divergence but in a convergence of the moments which posit the unity, and the process itself is not one of separation but of re-unification. What gives rise to this process is, in all probability, a power which takes exclusive possession of consciousness without the latter being aware of it... But this very potency which destroys the true unity, is transformed, stripped of its exclusiveness and overcome by the process in which it now posits the unity, not this time as something merely implicit but as something quite *real* or, as I am in the habit of saying, *cum ictu et actu*. Hence the monotheism thus posited is *real* and *formed*, a monotheism which is *understood* and *objective* for consciousness."[23]

The mythological process *as such*, polytheism considered in the totality of its successive moments, is the way to *truth* and hence is truth itself, says Schelling. Where, then, if anywhere, is *falsity* in mythology? Schelling speaks of falsity in two senses. In the first place there is the *falsehood which is prior to the process*, producing the tension that sets the process in motion. In the second place, there is the falsity of the various elements or moments of the process - i.e., the individual theodicies - *when, and only when, these exist* or are regarded as existing *in isolation or abstraction from the total process*. "In the process as such (and this is what matters) there is nothing of falsity, there is only *truth*. The truth is certainly not in the individual moments; if it were there would be no process. The truth is born in the theogonic process and is embodied in it. It is the end of the process and is therefore contained completely only in the process *as a whole*." From

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[23] pp. 210, 211.

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this it follows that the last mythology, which unites all the moments, is the true religion, but only to the extent that the truth is attainable by way of this theogonic process which "always has for its presupposition the estrangement from the divine self." "Successive polytheism is simply the way in which the true unity is re-produced." But what this last mythological consciousness reconstructs is only the image of the true God. It does not involve a relationship with the true God, the divine Self, the approach to whom was first opened up by Christianity. Hence "the monotheism to which the mythological process leads is not false, but it is exoteric as compared with the true or esoteric."[24]

The following passages variously express this central thesis of Schelling's work:

> "One can admit that the detail in mythology is false, but this does not imply the falsity of the whole considered in its final meaning - it does not imply the falsity of the total process... The multiplicity of the gods as such is merely an accidental fact which is cancelled out in the whole; it is not the intention, not the final purpose of the process."[25]
>
> "One could compare the moments of which mythology is composed with individual propositions in philosophy. Each proposition of a true system is true in its place and in its time, that is to say, when it is conceived as belonging to an onward movement, and each proposition is false when it is considered in isolation, detached from the unceasing progression.
>
> "In like manner, there is inevitably a point where one is obliged to say: God is the immediate principle of Nature, for can something exist which would not be God, or from which God would be excluded? To the obtuse, this is already pantheism, for they understand the phrase 'God is all' to mean 'God is all things'. But above things are the pure causes from which those things are derived;

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[24] pp. 211-214

[25] p. 212

> and God, because he is *all*, is the opposite of that immediate principle. The proposition therefore is true or false according to the angle from which it is viewed. It is *true* when it means that God is the principle of Nature - not, however, in order to remain such, but in order to cancel and negate himself as this principle and to posit himself as spirit (notice that here we already have three moments). It would be *false* if it meant that God is that principle in a particular, static or exclusive way."[26]

> "We have to consider the mythologies of the various peoples as in fact only so many moments of a single and identical process which passes through and affects the whole of mankind. Thus, every polytheistic religion which has become fixed within a particular people and remains among them as something static is, as such, a false religion since it now stands alone as an isolated moment. But we do not just view mythology in its separate moments. We consider it as a whole. We view all the mythological moments as indissolubly bound together in a state of perpetual movement. So long as humanity and each of itsparts are immersed in the mythological movement, so long as they are, so to speak, borne up and carried along by this current, they are on the way toward truth. It is only when a people disengages itself from this movement and resigns the transmission of the process to another people, that the former begins to live in error and in false religion."[27]

> "Each of the polytheistic religions, taken separately, is false but in the same sense that each object of nature, when separated from the movement which sweeps all things along, or rejected from the process and left behind like a dead remnant, is without truth, i.e., without *the* truth which it possesses in the whole and as a moment of the whole. It is not only those heathen peoples whose existence has continued up until our own time (the Hindus, for example) who find themselves in a perfectly absurd relation to the objects of their superstitious worship. Even the ordinary Greek had fundamentally the same attitude with respect to his ancient religion which had become fixed and motionless. False religion, as such, is never anything but a dead and meaningless remnant of a process *which, in its totality, is truth*."[28]

Schelling can now offer the following outline-summary of the various interpretations of mythology examined in his Introduction - "as these appear to one who takes objective truth as

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[26] pp. 212f.

[27] p. 213

[28] p. 214

his chief point of view":

A. There is no truth anywhere in mythology

Either (i) it has a purely poetic significance and any truth found in it is merely accidental

or (ii) it is composed of meaningless representations which ignorance has produced and which poetic art has later elaborated and combined into a poetic whole (J. H. Voss).

B. There is truth in mythology, but not in mythology as such.

The mythological is:

Either (i) the cloak, the external envelope which disguises

- (a) a historical truth (Euhemeros)
- (b) a physical phenomenon (Heyne)

or (ii) (the effect of) a misunderstanding, a distortion

- (a) of a purely scientific truth (essentially irreligious) (G. Hermann)
- (b) of a religious truth (W. Jones, Fr. Creuzer).

C. There is truth in mythology as such.[29]

Initially, and in a special way, the truth in mythology is a religious truth. For those caught up in the process this is the only meaning it can have. But along with this particular meaning, mythology has a general significance, for it is "inconceivable that the principles of a process which is established as theogonic could be other than the principles of all being and all becoming."[30] The truth of mythology is a universal truth - including historical and physical truth - because "the general process repeats itself in this mythological process." The powers which create and "inaugurate" consciousness and actuate the mythological process are the same powers which create and posit Nature.

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[29] p. 216

[30] p. 218

> "Human consciousness, no less than Nature, is a product of Becoming. It is not something outside of the creation but the End of it. The potencies, therefore, must work together toward it as toward a goal... Thus, the powers which rise up again in consciousness ... and reveal themselves as theogonic powers, can be none other than those which produced the world. It is precisely by rising again that they cease to be subjective and submissive to consciousness as to their unity, and become again objective, assuming anew, with respect to consciousness, the character of external cosmic powers which, in their unity (i.e., when they posited consciousness) they had lost.
>
> "The mythological process can be only the re-constitution of the vanished unity. But this unity can be re-established in a way no different from that in which it was originally posited. In other words, the potencies must pass through all the states and relationships to one another that they had in the natural process. We do not mean that mythology was born under the influence of nature, from which the inner life of man is rather excluded because of this process, but that the mythological process unfolds according to the same laws and passes through the same stages as those through which Nature originally passed.
>
> "Between consciousness in its simple essentiality and consciousness in its realisation, between the unity which is posited in it in a purely essential way and the unity which is effectively realised in it - this unity being the goal of the theogonic movement - there, between the two, is the world. The moments of the theogonic movement, therefore, do not have meaning exclusively for the theogonic process; they are of general significance. [31]

d. The true Philosophy of Mythology

In the light of the above conclusions, the true science of mythology will be that which represents the absolute process in the mythological process. But it is philosophy which has as its object the absolute or general process. It follows that "the true science of mythology is the philosophy of mythology"[32] and this is the same as saying that the other ways of dealing with mythology do not recognise the truth in it. Schelling stresses the point that the idea of process is "not to be studied in some fabricated mythology but in actual mythology." It is not merely a matter of tracing some general outline; instead, "everything depends on recognising the moments under the chance form which they have inevitably assumed in reality." "Its objective birth, independent of human opinion, thought and volition, confers on mythology an equally objective content and truth."[33] To justify this conclusion, to establish mythology as a general phenomenon and to throw light on the precise nature of its causes, was a philosophical task. A simple enumeration of interpretations was not enough.

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[31] pp. 217f

> "We had to attain the true by means of the successive negation of the relatively true (which, by the way, is at the same time the relatively false) interpretation. Our interpretation became for us the Philosophy of Mythology only when no other premiss was any longer possible except the assumption of a necessary and eternal condition of human nature - a condition which, in its development and clarification, is transformed into a law... The other views cannot have failed to grasp some aspect of the subject, however, and... must be given some place in the finished theory." [34]

Now Philosophy, according to Schelling, deals with the essence not the existence of things. It searches for the animating principle (lebendigen Keim), the true and proper nature of things.[35] Hence Philosophy has nothing to do with four classes of objects: (a) those which possess no essential reality but exist only in the arbitrary opinion of men, (b) those which are corrupt and distorted, (c) the unbounded and incomplete, and (d) the dead, motionless and stagnant.[36] But Mythology does not fall into any of these classes. Schelling has discovered that (a) mythology is a natural and necessary product, beyond all arbitrariness and invention; (b) it is not a product of a process of destruction but is the original product of that consciousness which strives to restore and re-establish itself; (c) it is a true totality, a self-contained world in itself (as Nature is), enclosed within definite limits, possessed of a definite beginning, passing through definite intermediate phases and completing itself by arriving at a definite end;[37] (d) it is essentially mobile, its movement being "a self-movement realised by virtue of its own immanent law. It is the highest human consciousness which lives in it; and by overcoming the contradictions in which it gets involved, mythology demonstrates that it is real, true and necessary."[38]

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[32] p. 219 [33] p. 220 [34] p. 221 [35] p. 222

The expression "Philosophy of Mythology" is thus entirely appropriate and just as intelligible as "Philosophy of Language", "Philosophy of Nature", etc.[39] It is, moreover, both demanded and justified "by the tendencies of the age", and represents the consummation of previous endeavors.[40] It becomes possible, however, only if mythology is successfully traced back to presuppositions of a general character and derived therefrom as a necessary consequence. This will be the task of Schelling's Philosophical Introduction. Finally, once a Philosophy of Mythology exists it cannot fail to broaden and stimulate other sciences. In fact, Schelling's final lecture considers the influence of the results already attained on the Philosophies of History, Art and Religion.

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[36] p. 224f

[37] p. 224. "In the mythological process there appears a line of development as complete and natural as that which is manifest in the physical realm when an organism, affected by some disorder, tends inevitably to take a regular and natural course toward the re-establishment of health" (p. 224)

[38] Ibid.

[39] p. 225. Schelling adds: "Philosophy began to consider Mythology in depth only when it became aware of itself as a process enclosed within history and characterised by successive and multiple phases, or at least only from the moment when it understood and declared itself to be the history of consciousness," later incorporating Nature into Philosophy as a necessary moment in its development.

e. Relation to History, Art, and Religion: Philosophical Religion

The Philosophy of Mythology, since it has demonstrated the existence of a theogonic process in the consciousness of primitive man, will influence the Philosophy of History.[41]

As we have seen, Schelling believes there can be no philosophical knowledge of what is indeterminate and unbounded. Hence he is critical of what passes for Philosophy of History in his day, since it makes the assumption that history's past, like its future, goes "on into infinity" just as it is. "Belief in limitless and therefore meaningless progress is one of the articles of faith of contemporary wisdom."[42] Furthermore,

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[40] p. 229. Schelling cites works by J.A.Kanne who seems to hold that Mythology rests upon a monotheism - or pantheism - more profound than a purely historical monotheirm (p. 226f). But he claims it was due to Fr. Creuzer's efforts that mythology attracted attention and recognition: "His classically beautiful exposition, his remarkable and authentic learning supported and illuminated by a profound central idea, succeeded in spreading and establishing in ever wider circles the conviction that it is necessary to consider and study mythology from a higher point of view." (p. 228).

[41] pp. 230-238 [42] p. 232

Schelling charges, "current notions" do not really distinguish historic and pre-historic periods, for they hold merely that events of the former period are known while those of the latter are unknown - a purely accidental feature. Or again, they claim the events of history are sgnificant while those of prehistory are insignificant, representing the forgotten infancy of the race - a view which fails to recognise the "decisive and determinative importance for human destiny" of that formative, prehistoric age.[43]

Hence Schelling concludes that historians of his time are a long way from possessing a true philosophy of history. "By regarding time as an unlimited process, doors are opened to all kinds of arbitrariness." "Reason cannot orient itself in such an uncompleted and non-delimited region." "We do not know the most important thing, the beginning."[44] But Schelling claims his present studies have given to the past limits and a form. "History is now divided into contrasting periods which are really and inwardly different from one another." Prehistory is the time of crisis, of transition.

> "Mythology's becoming, i.e., its own historic existence, filled the prehistoric period. A reversed Euhemerism is the correct view. Contrary to what Euhemeros taught, mythology does not contain the events of the most ancient history. It is the other way around... Prehistory was filled with those inner processes and movements of consciousness which resulted in the formation of the mythological systems, the theodicies of the peoples and finally the separation of mankind into peoples.
>
> "Accordingly, the historic period and the prehistoric period are no longer merely relatively distinct aspects of one and the same period; they are two essentially different periods, mutually exclusive and therefore mutually delimiting. (During the former) the consciousness

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[43] pp. 233f.

[44] p. 234

> of mankind was subject to an inner necessity, a process which removed mankind, so to speak, from the external, real world; but as peoples, through an inner decision and as a result of the same crisis, ...freed themselves from the process as such... they engaged in those external, worldly and profane exploits which provide the content of the historical period." ...Mythology in general presents itself, in the historical period, as something already complete and available."[45]

But this pre-historical period, this time of transition, is only relatively pre-historic (for it contained a series of real events), and is itself delimited by a third period of perfect historical immobility in which man is still one and undivided. This "absolutely prehistoric period" acts simply as a moment, a pure starting point, itself requiring no limit since it contains no true succession of events.

> "Then too, of course, the sun rose and set, men went to sleep and woke up, made love, were born and died. What we mean is that it contained no advance and therefore no history, just as an individual has no history if all the yesterdays and todays of his life are the same. Everything was in the end what it was in the beginning, hence it was a pure and simple identity, a non-temporal time whose duration is a matter of complete indifference....It forms the limit not simply of a time but of time in general. It is where one finishes up in tracing back the course of time. To move beyond it is to step back into the supra-historical. It is a kind of eternity (Cf. Olam in Genesis)."[46]

We are thus presented with a system of times related to the four stages in man's religious development (supra p.). By making use of the distinction between Geschichte (the actual succession of events) and Historie (our knowledge of them), Schelling states this system as follows:[47]

(a. the supra-historical
(b. the absolutely pre-historical or pre-geschichtliche period

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[45] pp. 235f.

[46] pp. 236f.

[47] See pp. 236-238

(the period of "natural theism")
(c. the relatively pre-historical or pre-historische period, (the period of relative monotheism)
(d. the historical (historische) period, (the period of the polytheisms and of revelation)

Hence, the history of our species, according to Schelling, does not take place in a disorderly, inorganic, unbounded time, but is enclosed in an organism, a system of times, every member of which is an independent time, limited by and "dethroning" (so to speak) its predecessor. Thus, when History is understood in the widest sense, the Philosophy of Mythology is seen as the first necessary part of the Philosophy of History.

Secondly, the Philosophy of Mythology bears a fundamental relationship to the Philosophy of Art.[48] In fact,

> "whatever be our reasons for pressing back into the earliest period of our race, whether to inquire into its beginnings in general or into the first beginnings of religion and civil society, or of the sciences and arts, we always come up against that dark space, that χρόνος ἄδηλος, which is occupied only by mythology."[49]

Now there are those who claim that "all of man's science, art and culture started out from the most wretched beginnings." Heerens, for example, sees a continuity, a progression, from the cave-markings done by the Hottentots to the richly ornamented underground temples of Ellora and Mavalpuram in India. "Art", he says, "must have made this ascent." But such a suggestion is, for Schelling, incredible. We might as easily wait, he says, for something to be born from nothing! The principle of the continuous progress of the human race, almost sacred to so many, ought to be called in question. "Where there is progress there

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[48] pp. 239-245

[49] p. 239

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is also a starting point, a whence and a whither" but, contrary to what is generally assumed, this progress is not from the small to the great but in just the reverse direction!

> "It is always the great, the gigantesque which constitutes the beginning; the organically composed, the confined and limited, always come later. Homer has a greatness such that no later period was able to produce any one like him... What distinguishes the various epochs is not that they contain more or less of so-called culture. Rather are they separated because of inward differences which are based on, and due to, essentially or qualitatively different principles which succeed one another; and each of them can achieve, in its own period, its highest expression."[50]

When we consider the "ingenious and sometimes astonishing and prodigious architectural realisations" of the ancient Babylonians, Phoenicians and Egyptians, the only source of inspirations sufficient to account for them is the mythological process in which positive, real powers were operative.

> "Works like the Hindu and Egyptian monuments do not arise as a result of the mere passage of time, as stalactites grow in caves. The same power which manifested itself inwardly by creating the representations of mythology... manifested itself outwardly and turned into art those bold undertakings whose proportions exceed anything realised in the later period.
>
> "The force which, in the mythological representations, carried the human consciousness beyond the limits of reality, was also the first mistress to teach man what is great and meaningful in art. It... raised mankind, as if by a divine hand, and inspired even in the later creations of antiquity a greatness which remains unequalled..."[51]
>
> "Art is always art and, as such, is originally and by nature, profane and pagan... Christian art should try to express not what is particular to Christianity but what is universal in it, i.e., the elements in terms of which it is related to paganism. It is good... when art chooses, from among the subjects presented by revelation, those which transcend what is narrowly Christian: events like the confusion of tongues, the birth of peoples, the

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[50] p. 241

[51] Ibid.

> destruction of Jerusalem and others whose great and universal associations have been brought out not only by the artist."[52]

The Philosophy of Mythology thus forms an indispensable foundation for the Philosophy of Art, because mythology alone provides that original poetry, that raw material, that original source of ideas prior to all conscious and formal, poetic and plastic, artistic creation.[53] Schelling felt that the poetry of his own time was especially arbitrary because it was lacking in poetic subjects. By contrast, Greek art was extraordinarily favored by the character and quality of its subjects, especially those furnished by Greek mythology. "Art has always felt the necessity for real beings which would at the same time be (not merely signify) principles, general and eternal concepts. And philosophy's task is to demonstrate the possibility of such."[54]

We must always bear in mind, however, that antiquity is a particular kind of world, with its own proper principle.

> "A psychology based on present conditions is... not qualified to explain appearances and events of the distant past (Vorzeit) any more than mechanical laws, valuable for a nature that has become stable and fixed, are qualified to explain the period of original becoming and the first emergence of life."[55]

Thirdly, this fact of a "theogonic process in which mankind is implicated from the moment of the first awakening of real consciousness" is important for the history of religion and will therefore have a powerful influence on the Philosophy of Religion.[56]

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[52] pp. 242f.

[53] "Hence any comprehensive philosophy of art must assign an important place to the discussion of the nature and meaning as well as the origin of mythology - as I myself did in lectures on the Philosophy of Art delivered fifty years ago". p. 243. (These lectures of 1803 were never published).

[54] p. 244

[55] p. 245

Germans had worked hard at Philosophy of Religion, but in Schelling's view this science was still uncertain of itself, partly, perhaps, because it had always remained in too great dependence on the evolution of general philosophy. Instead of acquiring an independent content and making its own unique contribution, it had merely reproduced the movements of the latter. Hermann, for example, left no place for Philosophy of Religion as an independent science. Although he distinguished two kinds of religion, revealed and natural, he first followed tradition in setting revelation over against natural reason, and then identified Natural Religion with Philosophical Religion, absorbing the latter as a mere chapter in general Philosophy.[57]

Now Schelling has opened up a new possibility. He distinguishes three kinds of religion: natural, revealed and philosophical. Natural Religion is no longer another name for rational or philosophical religion, but now stands for Mythological Religion, the religion which arises blindly or naturally. Since mythology arose out of a real relationship between the human essence and God, since it reproduces itself naturally and is independent of and prior to all reason, philosophy and revelation, it alone is "natural" to mankind, and appears first.[58]

Historically, Revealed Religion appears second, entailed, caused and mediated by Natural (mythological) Religion. Like the latter, Revelation is independent of reason, for it is mediated to man and implies a will, an intention. Christianity puts itself forward as a religion which brings deliverance from the blind power of paganism, but of course, to overcome paganism, Christianity had to be a real process, an actual event, not a mere doctrine. "The mythological process can be opposed only by an Act, and this act will be the content of Christianity."[59] "The formal significance of revelation is to be that which overcomes Natural, unfree Religion." The latter, moreover, is the material pre-condition of the former, providing the material in terms of which revelation works itself out. Revelation has Paganism in itself in the way that "that which sublimates possesses in itself what is sublimated." Even in the most orthodox circles, observes Schelling, it was once permissible to see in Paganism distortions of revealed truths; but today we should be allowed to see in Christianity a Paganism that has been straightened out and set right![60] Between the two kinds of religion, there is an inward affinity, and the thrusting out of all pagan elements would remove all reality from Christianity.

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[56] pp. 245-254 [57] p. 246 [58] p. 247

> "The affinity between mythology and revelation is revealed in their common external fate, i.e., attempts have been made to rationalise both by making, in each case, the same distinction between form and content, between what is essential and what is merely the time conditioned guise in which they appear; in other words, to reduce them to a rational sense, or at least to a meaning that appeared rational... Christianity, of course, is the relation to the Father and the worship of the Father in spirit and in truth. In this relation every pagan element, i.e., everything which is not in relation to God in his truth, disappears. But this result would itself have no empirical truth without its (pagan) presuppositions. He who sees Me, sees the Father, said Christ. But he added:

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[59] p. 249

[60] p. 250

> 'I am the Way' and 'No one comes to the Father but through Me'."[61]

Natural and Revealed religions are both real; hence, for Schelling, it is axiomatic that there can be no real difference between them in terms of their final content.

> "Both must contain the same elements, and all that will vary will be the meaning of these elements from one religion to the other. Since the distinction between these two religions consists simply in the fact that one is natural and the other divinely posited, it follows, that the same principles which in the former are merely natural, take on in the latter the significance of divine principles.
>
> "Without pre-existence, Christ is not Christ. He existed as natural potency before he appeared as divine personality. ...These very potencies in whose unity God exists and reveals himself are, in their disjunction and in the process, extra-divine powers, i.e., merely natural powers in whom God is not totally absent, and yet he is not present in his divinity, i.e., according to his truth, for in his divine Ipseity, God is One; He cannot be several or enter into a process."[62]

It was Christ who opened a way for both Jew and Pagan to worship the Father in spirit and in truth. Even in Revelation (the Old Testament) there was something which kept men from true spiritual worship. Hence Christ's appearance is the End of Revelation "precisely because he took away that which caused the alienation from God."[63]

The third religion, in this historical succession, is Philosophical Religion. It too is real religion (and we are reminded again that "between real religions there can be no difference either essentially or in terms of content"). It has in itself those factors of real religion which are present in Natural and Revealed Religion, but it contains them in a different way.

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[61] p. 251

[62] p. 251

[63] pp. 251f.

> "The difference boils down to the fact that the same principles which operate implicitly and without being understood in both revealed and natural religion, are consciously grasped and understood in philosophical religion. Hence, philosophical religion, far from being entitled by itsposition to suppress the religions which precede it, has the task (by virtue of the place it occupies) and the means (by virtue of its content) to comprehend those religions which are independent of reason and to understand the whole truth and characteristic significance of each."[64]

e. Transition to the Philosophical Introduction

Now such a Philosophical Religion would lead us directly to a philosophy of mythology. It would "make intelligible (i.e., demonstrate as possible) what we have discovered and recognised in mythology and also, indirectly, in revelation, namely, a real relation between the human consciousness and God." This Philosophical Religion can be "only the final product and highest expression of completed philosophy," but such a philosophical religion does not exist. No existing philosophy of phenomena is equal to the task of adequately interpreting mythology. Hence mythology cannot allow itself to be reduced to the measure of any existing philosophy. "Quite the reverse! It is our view of mythology - one which is factually grounded, and one which will inevitably influence particular philosophical sciences, as we have shown - it is this view which must assume the right and the power to broaden philosophy and the philosophical consciousness itself, or at least prevail upon them to transcend their present limits."[65]

Thus, his exhaustive historical critique, presupposing no philosophical orientation, brings Schelling at last to the point

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[64] p. 252

[65] p. 254

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where his view of mythology remains as "the only possible one." Now the theogonic process is to become "the sole object of the science to which the preceding lectures have served simply as introduction."[66] He must understand it from a philosophical standpoint: How is the mythological (theogonic) process both possible and necessary?

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[66] p. 206

PART II

PHILOSOPHY AND BEING

A Summary-Translation of the
Philosophical Introduction to the
Philosophy of Mythology

Münchner Jubiläumsdruck of Schellings Werke,
edited by Manfred Schröter (1959),
Vol. V, pp. 437-754.

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INTRODUCTION TO PART II

The results of the historical-critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology have presented Schelling with a whole new task. Is it possible to effect a rational understanding of Mythological and Revealed religion? an understanding which takes with complete seriousness the objectively theological character of Religion?

It will be recalled that at the conclusion of Part I three modes of religion were discriminated. Mythology or Paganism was viewed as blind, unfree, unspiritual religion, the product of a necessary theogonic process, logically prior to Revelation and a preparation for the latter. Revealed Religion, on the other hand, was understood as freely imparted knowledge of God. Strictly speaking it is represented by Christianity alone which makes explicit what was the hidden, inner truth of Mythology. The third form of religion was what Schelling called Philosophical Religion, and this represented the still higher standpoint of Reason seeking an understanding of both Mythological and Revealed religion.

It is of first importance to understand what Schelling means by "Philosophical Religion." He is by no means referring to a rationalist interpretation of religion from outside. The conclusion of our last section makes abundantly clear that Schelling has in mind the activity of the religious consciousness itself as it seeks to understand itself from within. Thus, his Philosophical Religion may be called

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"Philosophy of Religion" but only if this does not obscure the fact that Schelling's Philosophical Religion is for him *both* Philosophy *and* Religion! It is faith seeking understanding, as Fr. Copleston has noted.[1] But an understanding sought from within does not annul what is understood. In Schelling's view, Philosophical Religion is *real religion* and *true philosophy*, and we repeat his words:

> "...the *same* principles which operate implicitly and without being understood in both revealed and natural religion, are *consciously grasped and understood* in philosophical religion. Hence, philosophical religion, far from being entitled by its position to *suppress* the religions which precede it, has the task (by virtue of the place it occupies) and the means (by virtue of its content) to *comprehend* those religions which are independent of reason and to understand the whole truth and characteristic significance of each."[2]

Such a Philosophical Religion *does not yet exist*, declares Schelling, but the way to it is opened up by Christianity. Mythology and Revelation arose in the first place and independently of reason and philosophy. But just as Christianity presupposes Mythology, so Philosophical Religion presupposes Christianity and cannot exist without it. It arises within Christianity alone. "Revelation... by its inner victory over unspiritual religion, frees consciousness from its power and opens the way to *free* religion, religion of the spirit. And since it is the nature of this free religion to be sought and found only in freedom, it can realise itself completely only as Philosophical Religion. Hence Philosophical Religion

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[1] Fr. Copleston, *A History of Philosophy* (London, 1963) VII, 141.

[2] Schelling *W* VI, p. 252.

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is historically mediated by Revealed Religion."[3]

We should note also the word "mediated." Schelling stresses that "the free religion is only mediated through Christianity; it is not immediately posited by it."[4] In contrast with the simple acceptance of the original Christian revelation on authority, Philosophical Religion regards that revelation, and the facts of Christian life and belief, as subject-matter for free reflective understanding. It is faith, not as blind acceptance but as intellectual understanding and free affirmation. It is "Positive" philosophy.

As far as the title "Positive Philosophy" is concerned, Kuno Fischer has correctly noted[5] the flexibility with which Schelling uses it. In the narrowest sense, it is the Philosophy of Christianity. In a second and wider sense it is Second Philosophy which is grounded in and incorporates First or Negative Philosophy. In the third and widest sense, it is Philosophy of Religion and thus embraces the whole Philosophy of Mythology and Revelation - the attempt to set forth the whole historical development of the religious consciousness in the history of mythology and revelation and understand it as God's progressive self-revelation and redemptive activity. In this sense Schelling can identify Positive Philosophy with Philosophical Religion or Historical Philosophy,[6] for it now

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[3] W V, p. 437

[4] W V, p. 440

[5] Kuno Fischer, Schelling's Leben, Werke und Lehre, Heidelberg, 1923, p. 795.

[6] "Positive Philosophy is historical philosophy," V, 753.

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comprehends both his Philosophy of Religion and his Philosophy of History.

Now Philosophical Religion (or Philosophy of Religion) in the restricted sense of Philosophy of Christianity (or Philosophy of Revelation - i.e. "Positive Philosophy in its narrowest meaning) shall be presented in Part III of this exposition. In the present section (Part II), we are concerned with the negative aspect of Philosophical Religion - with Philosophical Religion _as philosophy_, so to speak. We take up the _Philosophical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology_ (Vol. V, pp. 437 - 754) whose task is to begin with the result of the _Historical-Critical Introduction_ - viz., mythology as a theogonic process grounded in a necessary succession of potencies - and to show _how_ this process is both possible and necessary. Schelling regards this as a "negative" task.

By _Negative Philosophy_ Schelling means philosophy confined to the world of concepts and essences, thus contrasting with "positive" philosophy which stresses facts and existence. Of course, our philosopher does not agree with those who think the former is a waste of time. No system can be constructed without concepts. "Even if the positive philosopher places the emphasis on existence, he obviously does not and cannot disdain all consideration of what exists."[7] We must "assert the connection, yes, the unity" between positive and negative philosophy.[8]

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[7] Copleston, _op. cit_., p. 136. Cf. _W_ V, pp. 588f.

The fourteen lectures of the Philosophical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology were written between 1847 and 1852 and represent Schelling's last philosophical work. As the lectures now stand, they are very poorly organised and extremely repetitive. It is only fair, however, to point out that Schelling was about to revise his notes when he fell ill during the winter of 1853-54. (He died in August of 1854). The important Lecture 24, for example, was pieced together by Schelling's son from individual hand-written pages and suggestions left behind by his father.[9]

The volume contains historical and speculative material, and we offer our exposition under these two heads. We begin with Schelling's survey of Reason's liberation from the authorities represented by paganism, paganised Christianity, medieval metaphysics and authoritative revelation, and his tracing of the emerging autonomy of reason in modern philosophy from Bacon and Descartes through Kant. We then present Schelling's account of speculative metaphysics in which an autonomous reason seeks - through a form of Induction or rational Dialectic - to find the structure of (noetic) reality and its first or ultimate principle.

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[8] W V, p. 746. The assertion of this connection was certainly nott new for Schelling. As Bolman points out (see his The Ages of the World, Col. U.P. 1942, p. 52), Schelling expressed the desire to treat of the "noble art of reason" as early as The Ages of the World. Later in his Munich lectures On the History of Modern Philosophy, Schelling declared: "Any philosophy which does not remain grounded in the negative but tries instead to reach what is positive, the divine, immediatly and without that negative foundation, will inevitably end up by dying of spiritual impoverishment" (W V, 246).

Consider, too, these words from his First Lecture in Berlin (15 November 1841): "I will not occasion the loss of anything won for true science since Kant. How should I give up that philosophy which I myself founded earlier, the discovery of my youth? (My) task and purpose is not to put another philosophy in the place (of negative philosophy), but to add to it a new science until now considered impossible. This will restore (negative philosophy) to its true foundation and give it once again the orientation it lost when it went beyond its natural limits - i.e., when it was regarded as the whole, instead of simply a fragment of a higher whole." (W, VI, p. 758).

[9] See Footnote by D.H., W V, p. 735.

This whole discussion, of course, is in the realm of the hypothetical. From the supreme essence one can deduce nothing but other essences; from the Absolute Idea nothing but other ideas. Schelling is entirely explicit about this. From a What one cannot deduce a That. The negative philosophy cannot explain the existent world. Its deduction of the world is not a deduction of existents but only of what things must be if they exist. Of being which is outside God, the negative philosopher can only say, "if it exists, it can exist only in this way and only as such and such."[10] It follows that we may view this whole section as climaxing in a critique of rationalism (especially of Hegelianism, but also of Schelling's own earlier philosophy), since rationalism, for the later Schelling, completely by-passes the existential order. But we must also recognise the necessity for rational or negative philosophy as part of that "whole" which for Schelling is Philosophical Religion.

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[10] W, V, p. 558. Cf. p. 744. Cf. Copleston, op. cit., p. 135.

CHAPTER ONE

THE CRITIQUE OF ALL PREVIOUS RATIONAL PHILOSOPHY[1]

A. The History of the Emancipation of Reason

Schelling's search is for that Philosophy (or Philosophical Religion, as defined above) which can truly understand Mythology as something characteristically religious, and render intelligible to us that "necessary theogonic process" which has given rise to the polytheistic religions.

He discerns the first faint glimmerings of such an understanding in Greek philosophy. (For Schelling, "the mythological consciousness reached its end and final crisis in the Greek consciousness."[2]) In Plato, for example, there seem to be certain "anticipations of Christianity." But in Aristotle, unfortunately,[3] Mythology receives no serious attention. To be sure, Aristotle confesses that even philosophers love myths because of the wonders they contain, but he ignores mythology because he could not recognise therein a source of empirical knowledge. The plain fact is, says Schelling, that the philosophy of antiquity failed to satisfy Paganism's demand for self-understanding; hence the "tragic aspect" which runs through the whole of ancient polytheism.[4]

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[1] This chapter is a summary-translation of Lectures 11 and 12, the first two lectures of the Philosophical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology, W, V, 437-476.

[2] W, V, 437

[3] "What a work Aristotle would have produced had he devoted himself to the study of the various religions of the nations, as he did to the study of different political constitutions. Through his royal pupil, he could have received as much information about the religions as about the animals of far-away places." (W, V, 438)

Stoics and Epicureans gave merely general explanations of Mythology (allegorical and euhemeristic, respectively, as we have seen).[5] With the Neo-Platonists, however, there is an approach to a Philosophical Religion. True, they resorted to allegorical explanations, and in so doing they interpreted Mythology as thorough-going rationalists. But it is also true that their efforts to oppose Christianity led them to proclaim the traditional theodicy as truth, in two ways. On the one hand, they tried to make their philosophy look like a mythology (as when Plotinus called his highest principles by the name of Ouranos, Kronos and Zeus). On the other hand, they interpreted Mythology as a kind of unconscious, natural philosophy (to this extent showing more insight than Aristotle). But "to this extent Mythology ceased to be religion for them," concludes Schelling, and after Porphyry their philosophy lapsed into theurgy and magic. It may have been this competition with Christianity, plus the ecstatic element in Mythology itself, which led them to the view that Mythology can be understood only in an ecstatic philosophy, one which transcends reason. This point will be taken up later. It is enough here to note that the Neo-Platonists do not belong to pure antiquity but to the age of transition. They have already "fallen under the influence of the spirit of Christianity, however much they try to exclude it."

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[4] _W_, V, 438 [5] _W_, V, 438. See Pt I, Ch. 1, above.

Their case does not count against the thesis that it is Christianity alone which historically mediates free or philosophical religion.

This is Schelling's first conclusion: that Philosophical Religion did not exist in antiquity and was not even possible then. It became possible only when Christianity freed men from the blind, external power of Paganism. But, ironically, this possibility could not be realized for many centuries! The first problem was that the Church itself, in order to overcome Paganism, became for a time a blind, external power - for Paganism was not vanquished "by rational discourse inspired by human wisdom."[6] Then later, the victory won, Christianity relaxed its attitude toward Paganism only to find itself *penetrated* by it.

> "Previously (Christianity) had been a *principle* of involuntary knowledge. Now it became an *object* of voluntary knowledge by placing itself, *to this extent*, on the same level as Paganism. Signs of this alignment were the suddenly awakened enthusiasm, indeed, the love for classical antiquity in which Christian culture no longer saw anything opposed to itself; the great revolution in the arts; the abandonment of traditional ecclesiastical models in favor of a human, natural representation of Christian subjects which received, to this extent, a pagan or profane appearance; the attitude of the great writers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries who saw practically no difference between Paganism and Christianity, since to a certain extent they placed themselves above both - as when cardinals of the Holy Church, speaking in the name of the Pope, did not hesitate to call the latter 'representative *of the immortal gods on earth*', and to refer to the Holy Virgin as a *goddess* (a well-known expression of Cardinal Bembi. See *Lipsii Epist*. 37, Centur II). Such levity merely promoted the still deeper penetration of Paganism into the Church. The formation of a powerful, highly privileged priesthood, continuous sacrifices, expiations, mortifications, exorcisms, divine service based on external and dead forms, the cult of angels, martyrs, and saints - such were the pagan elements against which the founders of the Reformation arose."[7]

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[6] *W*. V. 441 [7] *W*. V. 441f

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To this "paganized Christianity" of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Reformers opposed a re-discovered primitive Christianity. But still Reason was not "free", for no sooner had the Reformation cast off the external authority of the Church than it succumbed to the external authority of the written Word.

The next step was inevitable. The written documents of Revelation were subjected to a critique which attacked first "the truth of what was given in Revelation" and ended by "calling into question the very possibility of a Revelation."[8] Man sought a completely free, critical knowledge, imagining that somehow he would be content with this contentless (i.e., purely abstract) freedom. But there was a final disillusionment, for after freeing itself from the authorities represented by Church, Scripture and Revelation, Reason now found itself to be in bondage to _its own presuppositions_. "Consciousness simply became subject to another necessity, another law and other presuppositions, to wit, those of _its own cognitive power_ (its uncomprehended power of mental comprehension), the extent of which was unknown even to itself."[9]

To indicate what is meant by "reason in bondage to its own presuppositions", Schelling takes us back to the _Natural_ or _Rational Theology_ of Scholastics Metaphysics. Here was a rational science which the all-powerful Church not only tolerated but encouraged, "so long as it did not claim to possess the content of revealed religion as something it could comprehend," i.e., so long as it did not claim to be a Philosophical Religion.[10] Scholasticism recognized or presupposed three distinct sources of natural knowledge, all independent of Revelation. These three "authorities" were "Universal experience" (the testimony of the senses), "necessary general principles" (κοιναὶ ἔννοιαι, e.g., the Law of Causality) and "deductive reason" (the power of logical demonstration).[11]

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[8] _W_. V, 442 [9] _Ibid_.

In the service of religion, it was believed that this rationalistic metaphysic could demonstrate the immateriality of the soul and the *existence* of God. (God's *nature* was given by Revelation). The argument for God's existence moved from this "world of contingent existences" to "a final cause endowed with intelligence and freewill."

Commenting on this argument, Schelling grants that such a final cause "cannot exist fortuitously or have a cause of its existence outside *itself*, whence it follows that *if it exists at all*, it exists necessarily. But *that* it exists, by no means follows from *this* argument; instead, the argument always presupposes it."[12] The problem, says Schelling, is that Reason

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[10] Schelling notes: "At this stage there was no possibility of a *religion* of reason." *W*, V, 443

[11] *W*, V, 443f. Schelling quotes the following from the Preface to Melanchthon's *Locis theologicis* which indicates the basis of this old metaphysical edifice: "Causae certitudinis in philosophia sunt experientia universalis, principia et demonstrationes. - Demonstrativa methodus progreditur ab iis quae sensui subjecta sunt et a primis notitiis, quae vocantur principia. - Philosophia docet, dubitandum esse de his, quae non sunt sensu comperta, nec sunt principia, nec sunt demonstratione confirmata." (*W*, V, 444)

[12] *W*, V, 444

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is here thinking of God as if he were an object of possible experience whose "existence" could be proved just as we might try to prove the existence of any other particular object not yet given in experience, e.g., a planet which has not yet been seen. But God cannot be a particular existent alongside other existents, as we shall see. As for the alternative argument developed by Anselm - the ostensibly apodictic "ontological argument" which derived God's existence (that He is) from His essence (what He is) - Schelling makes this comment:

> "Even the great reputation of such a celebrated teacher of the Church as Anselm could not secure for (this argument) the right of entry into the dominant metaphysics. The great Scholastics, like Thomas Aquinas, did not accept it and it remained among those demonstrations in which experience is an element, demonstrations regarded by the successors of the great Scholastics (e.g., Gabriel Biel and even Occam) as yielding only probability, not apodictic certainty."[13]

Now the word "Reason" had two uses in Scholasticism. On the one hand, as opposed to "Revelation" it was made to signify "the whole of the natural knowledge of man, including knowledge furnished by experience." Hence the syllogistic science of medieval metaphysics could be called "rational" or "natural" knowledge. On the other hand, "Reason" referred to the mind's specific "power of deduction or demonstration." As such, it lacked autonomy in either metaphysics or theology.

> "As a special source of knowledge, reason had a purely formal or instrumental significance even in metaphysics. Hence, merely as the power of deduction or demonstration, reason could hope for no greater significance in theology. Since theology rested on the authority of Revelation, reason could aspire to no other role in theology than that of servant."[14]

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[13] W, V, 444f [But Bonaventura accepted it.] [14] W, V, 445.

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The transition to the modern period, Schelling declares, may best be understood as a process in which reason is liberated from the three authorities or presuppositions of "natural knowledge." The testimony of the senses, the power of general principles and the force of syllogistic reasoning continue, of course, to exercise a natural power over us, but now they were no longer to be taken for granted. Their legitimacy as sources of knowledge came under attack. Bacon, for example, recognised only sense-experience. He found the syllogism useless in the investigation of principles and causes, and was unwilling to place confidence in the objective validity of universal truths. For him, only those generalisations were valid which were reached through induction adequately based on empirical evidence. But then came Descartes who threw doubt even on the trustworthiness of our sense experiences!

> "Therewith the whole artificial fabric of metaphysics found itself in pieces. The break-up simply completed the rupture which the Reformation had made in the system of knowledge previously in force. The Reformation itself had been generated more by a profound religious and moral inspiration than by a scientific spirit, and had allowed the old metaphysics to stand intact. But for this very reason the Reformation remained incomplete.. To (Descartes), one who remained independent of the Reformation itself, fell the task of giving the first impulse to the movement of total liberation which continues to our own time."[15]

Now Reason is free! or rather, it is emerging into freedom. Its age-long struggles - first against the blind authority of mythological religion, then against the external authority of Church and Revealed Word, and now against the uncomprehended assumptions of natural knowledge - all this is past.

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[15] W, V, 446

But what is to be done with this freedom. Should Reason now "remain idly in enjoyment of its purity, simplicity and natural knowledge"? For Schelling, clearly not! Reason's true work is about to begin. Reason must produce a Science, a science free of all presuppositions, one which begins right at the beginning. This will not be a particular science: "The product of Reason itself can only be science itself, science in Plato's sense," i.e., Sophia. To find the beginning, the first principle of such Science, will be the first task of pure Reason.

The first thinker to seek such a "first principle" (in the modern period) was Descartes. His search may be described as the beginning of "the first stage after metaphysics," and it made possible a real advance toward the realisation of free or Philosophical Religion. We must now consider Schelling's account of the work of Descartes and of his successors.[16]

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[16] W, V, 449-451. Schelling continues to warn that the science to be produced by pure reason is not to be thought of as the final science, for when this pure rational science is elaborated, it may become our most urgent task to transcend it.

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B. Rational Philosophy from Descartes through Kant

Descartes sought an indubitable truth, a beginning which has its certainty in itself, a starting point or principle out of which rational science could be developed with certainty. He found it, as everyone knows, in his *Cogito, ergo sum*, and the way he followed was that of methodological doubt.[17]

Schelling offers two criticisms of Descartes. The first bears upon Descartes' method. "All doubt presupposes precisely that which is doubted," Schelling maintains, whence it follows that doubt can never lead us to what is beyond all presupposition. Descartes might as logically have argued that "if I doubt of the existence of things outside myself, then *they are*." Furthermore, the *cogito* implies "only that I am in the act of thinking; it does not imply that I have an independent existence outside of thinking." It implies "not *sum* in an unqualified way, but *sum res cogitans*." Hence, concludes Schelling, "doubt at the beginning of philosophy says either too much or too little, depending on how one takes it." Descartes should have begun by setting aside everything that is *doubtful in itself* (not merely what is doubtful *for me*). This would mean rejecting or considering as non-existing "anything and everything that is not posited and established by *reason itself*," i.e., everything that simply *is* without having at the same time the *power to be*.[18]

Schelling's second criticism focusses on Descartes' use of the "ontological" argument. In the end, that which is

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[17] *W*, V, 449

[18] *W*, V, 450-452

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certain for Descartes is really God, "since in thinking God we think the absolutely perfect essence, and he would not be this if he did not exist." Then the divine veracity is invoked by Descartes to guarantee that his clear and distinct ideas of external world, self and even eternal truths are not deceptions. It is clear, says Schelling, that Descartes considers the existence of God to be given in pure thought, "but he failed to derive it therefrom inasmuch as he slipped in a middle term" (viz., that "existence" is one of the perfections of the most perfect being). He is interested in this comprehensive concept of the absolutely perfect being only, it seems, to derive existence from it. He seems to forget that God "includes within himself all that there is of reality and perfection in other things," and he fails to show how our experiential world of limitations and negations could come forth from such a being.[19]

Nevertheless, Descartes had the right idea in wanting to begin with the Being posited in pure thought, for, according to Schelling, "certainty" belongs to that which exists in pure thought, "thought which does not go out from itself but which relates itself to itself alone, according to the universal principle known as the principle of contradiction."[20] But Descartes went wrong in attempting to prove the existence of this Being (as if he were just another particular entity, albeit the most perfect), and in doing so by resorting to a proof characterised by mediation. Clearly, "this is not the object of which Plato spoke when he said that *reason itself* touches upon it."[21] Descartes had failed to find the indubitable starting point, the principle, of rational science.

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[19] W., V, 452-3

[20] W., V, 452

It was Malebranche who made possible the next great step forward, by declaring not that "God exists," but that "God is Being" (*das Seiende*).[22] Of course, adds Schelling, Malebranche was "unaware of the importance" of his statement, and his thought was confused. Occasionally he used "being" in the generic sense - God is "generality," "being in general," "univeral being" - revealing the influence of the *genus generalissimum* and the *ens omnimodo indeterminatum* of the Scholastics. But he also says that God is *omne ens* or *omnia entia*, i.e., all that exists (*alles* Seiende), and not merely a particular being (*Wesen*). This is an important insight:

> "If one holds that God is the Existent, one gives up the notion of God as a *mere* particular entity (Einzelwesen) with which the demonstrations of earlier metaphysics were content. God *cannot* be a mere individual existent, and the God who is not *the* Existent could not be God. There can be no science of a mere particular entity... God is related to things only because he is the *general* essence (*allgemeine Wesen*). This does not mean, of course, that he is the Existent in an abstract, non-determined way, but in the most fully determinate sense. He is the Existent which lacks nothing of what belongs to Being (*Sein*), the perfect and complete Existent, τὸ παντελῶς ὄν, as Plato called it."[23]

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[21] *W*, V, 452f, 456

[22] "il est en un mot l'Etre." Schelling refers to the beginning of the *Entretien d'un philosophe Chretien avec un philosophe Chinois* for this sentence from Malebranche. Schelling renders *l'Etre* by *das Seiende* ("that which is," or "the Existent").

[23] *W*, V, 455. Cf. Plato, *De Rep*. V, 477A.

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Clearly, then, the proposition "God is Being" (i.e., God is the Existent) is not an existential proposition. It is *not* equivalent to saying "God exists." It is a purely attributive proposition and refers to "the being posited in pure thought," "the being of pure reason," or "the being enclosed in the Idea." Hence it implies a distinction between God and the Existent, if not in reality at least in Idea. "They must be as distinct as subject and object." "Already in his being-the-Existent, God must be conceived as one who is able-to-be-for himself, the separated one," (a χωριστὸν in the Aristotelian sense).[24]

This distinction does not exist in Descartes, says Schelling, but it does struggle to find expression in Malebranche. The latter speaks, for example, of "the divine substance taken absolutely," and the divine substance "as it relates itself to the creatures who participate in it" (a distinction borrowed, in Schelling's view, from St. Thomas).[25] Translated into Schelling's language, this could mean "that things participate in the Existent but not in *that which is* the Existent," the latter being "absolutely imparticipable." But Malebranche's distinction is of no use to him in understanding the world. If "God is all being," wonders Malebranche, how can we speak of "the absolute simplicity of the divine essence"? He is forced to conclude that "no finite spirit can comprehend this," and that the proposition "God is all things" must mean "we see all things only in God," whence it would follow that they do not exist

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[24] *W*. v 455, 456

[25] *W*. v. 456n

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outside him.[26]

In this historical retrospect, Schelling is making the point that when we think of God as "the Existent" (i.e., when we think of him as identical with his world) we can call him _a_ Being alright, but _not_ in the sense of one of the perfections which are united in God; rather, he is a Being which is its own perfection, for to be the Existent (das-Seiende-sein) is "to be the perfect, the complete, the finished." But pure rational science must move from God-as-the-Existent to God-as-He-is-in-Himself, _a Deo implicito ad Deum explicitum_, from the One who is wrapped up in the Existent to the One who has emerged out of the Existent and of whom we can say that He is _that which_ the Existent _is_.[27]

In other words, God is to be conceived in such a way that Being (the Existent) can be _predicated_ of him. "In order to derive the Existent from him, in order for him to be a _terminus a quo_ (so to speak), God must be something other than the Existent."[28] But this point was missed by Descartes, vaguely glimpsed by Malebranche, and totally denied by Spinoza.

For Spinoza, God is the "universal, infinite substance," and _nothing else_. Hence Spinoza's retention of the word "God" was really superfluous, "for God _is_ only inasmuch as he is infinite substance; he has no being distinct from his being-substance, for this is the meaning of the proposition that 'in God, essence and existence are one'."[29] "Enclosed in eternal Being, God is related to the world and to things purely and

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[26] _W_. V, 457 [27] _W_. V, 455f [28] _W_. V, 461 [29] _W_. V, 457f

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and simply as the essential, not the real, cause. And this purely logical consequence is merely asserted, not demonstrated." Thus Schelling sees Spinozism as a complete break in the purely rational development. It turned the great definition of God as "universal Being" into "an all-devouring dogma which swallowed up both science and religion."[30]

With Spinoza, reason came to a road-block. The movement which issued from Descartes never got beyond its starting point and therefore failed to arrive at rational science. And Spinoza's proclamation of the immobility of the principle dictated "an absolute scientific quietism." But reason, by its very nature, could not resign itself to such self-renunciation. So, while philosophers in England and France turned from metaphysics to a subjectively oriented empiricism, philosophers in Germany returned once more to metaphysics.[31]

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[30] W, V, 458. Schelling concedes that this material atheism of Spinoza (as distinct from formal atheism, Atheismus vulgaris), at least saved the substance of religion, and as such was admired by men like Goethe, Herder and Lessing. Cf. W, V, 461f

[31] W, V, 459f. Schelling takes note of a reaction, in terms of a personal God, which came from Jacobi: "Jacobi was so convinced of the impotence of syllogistic science that he believed he could ground belief in God - a God with whom one can speak and from whom one can receive answers, a God with whom one could be auf Du und Du (to use J G Hamann's expression), in brief, a God with whom a personal relation is possible - simply on his individual feeling...." Schelling feels Jacobi's position is correctly stated only if there is no alternative to ancient metaphysics on the one hand and demonstrative science in Spinoza's sense on the other. Since, for Schelling, the word "personal" applies "only to a being who is free of all generality and who exists only for himself, independently of reason and obedient only to his own will" (W, V, 463), it is obvious that rational knowledge will not discover such a God. "But what rational

The new metaphysics was broader and more eclectic. It took account of the contributions of English and French empiricism. The concepts of Substance and Cause, for example, could no longer function as simple presuppositions after their analyses by Locke and Hume respectively. The new metaphysics also took account of new elements introduced by Descartes (especially his use of the Ontological argument), by Leibniz (in his Theodicy) and by Spinoza. But as far as the search for a new beginning, an indubitable principle on which to build pure rational science, was concerned, Schelling concludes that after Descartes' efforts "there was everywhere stagnation rather than progress" - until the appearance of Kant.

> "Descartes had but momentarily shaken the old metaphysics that had been constructed by means of the natural reason. Since God, for Descartes, guaranteed the real existence of the sensible world and the validity of general principles, metaphysics could, on the ground thus assured, begin its ancient business all over again, its standpoint remaining basically intact. The task of totally abandoning this standpoint, of leading reason out of the self-estrangement imposed on it by purely natural (i.e., non-free) knowledge, and of bringing it back to itself - this task was reserved for a Critique which penetrated to the heart of things and investigated, from the ground up, the whole system of natural knowledge and its sources."[32]

The importance of Kant, for Schelling's present purpose, lies in two directions. First, in his strictures against "reason" (Vernunft) as a knowledge-producing faculty, and his claim that

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knowledge does not secure for us can be obtained by the science whose mission it is to extract the God who is enclosed in this rational knowledge out of the same, in order to re-instate him in his own proper being, i.e., to lead him toward freedom and personality." (Ibid.)

[32] W. V, 463f

"pure" reason produces Ideas which exercise an important regulative function.

> "Look over Kant's Critique of Pure Reason and you will find at once the three authorities of the old metaphysics (arranged in the same ascending order that we adopted when discussing them in Lecture 11): Experience (Sinnlichkeit in Kant), Understanding and Reason. The last is, for Kant, no longer the mere formal capacity to construe syllogisms (schliessen), but a faculty which he calls 'productive', an idea-producing capacity. But just as Reason, in its role as power of deduction, had its premisses partly in experience and partly in the understanding, so now, as faculty for the production of ideas, it presupposes both sensibility and understanding as its necessary conditions. Hence it is a long way from being pure reason (as Kant calls it)."[33]

Secondly, Kant is to be praised for "the courage and candor with which he declared that God is to be desired as a particular object" and his claim that God "is not the pure Idea but the Ideal of Reason," by which he meant the notion of the sum total of all possible and actual existences.

> "The most perfect being must contain at the same time the stuff, the matter of all possible and actual being (Sein).... Descartes knew of no other way of formulating the concept of the most perfect being than by saying: We all possess the idea of a supremely intelligent, absolutely perfect being, and this notion necessarily entails that he exists. But the necessity of his existence which derives therefrom could not eliminate the original arbitrariness of this notion.
>
> Kant shows, on the contrary, that the idea in question derives from the nature of reason itself, and is indispensable for every determination of things based on the understanding. Reason advances spontaneously toward the concept of such a being (Wesen), whence follows, of course, not the existence of this being, but at least the conclusion that it is a necessary and natural product of reason."[34]

Schelling shows how Kant arrives at the notion of God as the transcendental Ideal of pure Reason. Kant asks how the existence of any thing is possible. His answer is, first, "that its concept be in general possible, implying no logical contradiction." But, second, "the material possibility of a thing rests on its definiteness in every particular, i.e., that it affirm this definite and precise character with respect to all _possible_ predicates, since of all these mutually opposed and contradictory predicates only one necessarily belongs to it."[35]

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[33] W., V, 464 [34] W., V, 466

Now this idea of the sum total of all possible predicates, containing _a priori_ the data for all particular possibilities, becomes the idea of the aggregate or sum total of all possible _perfections_, for Reason, seeking the unconditioned unity of all possible predicates, cannot find this in the aggregate of empirical, conditioned perfections. After elimination of all _derived_ predicates, "the idea contains in itself only what is reality, pure perfection, pure and simple position. Hence it comprehends neither more nor less than _everything which belongs to being_."[36] Reason thus objectifies this Ideal of pure Reason by regarding it as the most perfect Being (_Ens perfectissimum_). This is then hypostatized as the most real Being (_Ens realissimum_), an individual Being, "in accordance with the definition of an individual as _res omnimodo determinata_."[37] And finally it is personified as the Supreme Intelligence, the God of theism, "since an actual unity of phenomena can be conceived only in the understanding."[38]

Now although it is natural for us to want to represent this Supreme Being as existing, the fact is that the process just outlined has nothing objective corresponding to it, and "leaves us in complete ignorance about whether or not such a Being, endowed with such exceptional qualities, really exists,"[39] which Kant himself well knew.

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[35] _W_, V, 466 [36] _W_, V, 467 [37] _W_, V, 467 [38] _W_, V, 468

> "If a possibility is to exist, there must be something of which it can be affirmed, and this something cannot be, in its turn, a mere possibility, but must be by its nature a reality, and therefore a particular being. But Kant by no means assumed that the sum of all possibilities exists. The original intention of Reason, he says, was purely and simply to be able to represent the necessary, general definition of things. To this end, however, the concept of all reality was sufficient. We were not entitled to demand that all this reality be given objectively, and that it be itself a thing."[40]

Nevertheless, let us assume, with Kant, that such a being does exist. How is it related to the manifold of the sensible world? According to Kant, says Schelling, there is this affinity:

> "Original being (das Urwesen) (clearly: the primal being as such), lies at the base of things, yet not, strictly speaking, as the sum total, i.e., not in the material sense of the word. The diversity of things must rather be considered as the perfect consequence of the original being in which consequence must be included the whole sensible world which cannot be an integral part of the idea of the supreme being. Nevertheless, if the stuff of all possible predicates is to be concentrated in the idea of a single thing, then the identity of the ground of the complete determination [the fact that the determinations they obey issue from a common source], will be proof of an affinity between all possibles and all reals."[41]

This would mean that God is related to the world as Antecedent to Consequent. The idea of God is the idea of an individual, necessarily existing, all-perfect Being, who is not the aggregate of finite realities but their unconditioned

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[39] W. V, 468 [40] W. V, 467 [41] W. V, 469

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condition and cause. "For Kant", concludes Schelling, "there is no real difference between the sum of all reality (the matter of limitation) and God. It is just that the former has been reduced for the sake of our representation, to a completely determined thing, an Individual."[42]

Now, the "sum total of all possibilities" is too broad a concept to serve as a fruitful starting point. We must impose limits on this indeterminate Kantian notion. Should we take actually existing things as the correlates of these possibilities, and declare their possibility to be constituted by the different modes of being they express? Should we be content with saying: "the organic has one mode of being, the inorganic another, and within the sphere of the organic the plant has not the same mode of being as the animal?"

> "But who does not recognize that these modes of being cannot possibly be original being? It must rather be conceded that these modes of being which experience affords, by passing through intermediate phases (with which we do not need to concern ourselves here), are finally derived from original differences, i.e., differences which are not arbitrary but which belong to the nature of being (Seiende) itself."[43]

Here we leave the historical development. Schelling has arrived at the notion of God as all-Being, and possesses in pure, autonomous Reason his analytic tool. He can now begin the speculative development: an analysis of the noetic structure of Being, a discrimination of those "original differences which belong to the nature of the Existent itself."

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[42] *Ibid.*, Schelling has based his account of Kant on the latter's *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, pp. 571-583 of the first edition. "The later edition shows no variation here." (*W*, V, 466)

[43] *W*, V, 470

CHAPTER TWO

SCHELLING'S VERSION OF PURE RATIONAL PHILOSOPHY[1]

In the preceding chapter we noted Schelling's account of the way in which Reason, emerging at last into autonomy, was employed by Continental Rationalists in a search for certainty. From Descartes through Kant, philosophy struggled to find an indubitable first principle, and to establish a science without arbitrary presuppositions. But Schelling believes none before him has successfully established a purely rational philosophy, and he intends to show how Reason, working autonomously, accomplishes the task. But three preliminary points must be checked.

First, What is the object of pure rational science? It is, as Schelling repeatedly points out, nothing less than Being itself. The special sciences, as Aristotle observed, cut off and investigate merely a portion of Being. None of them treats universally of Being as Being. "The object of philosophy, however, can be nothing but the complete object, the whole of Being, Being without any diminution - the Ideal, as Kant put it."[2]

Second, Why conduct such a rational search for Being itself? Primarily, replies Schelling, it is a quest undertaken for its own sake. The knowledge of Being as such would be the highest *Sophia* and would represent the supreme science (Plato's μέγιστον μάθημα). But rational science is also pursued *for the sake of the special sciences*, for these invariably take their objects and presuppositions for granted. (Physics, for example, is not interested in demonstrating the existence of matter; and so on). Unanimously they refer consideration and justification of their premisses to that science which is not merely outside, but *above* them all. Furthermore, inasmuch as rational science deliberately seeks its object (Being) in order to deduce from it all the others, we may call this object the "principle". Then the Science which proceeds *deductively* from this highest, unconditioned Principle, will be the highest science.[3]

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[1] This Chapter is a Summary-Translation of Lectures 13, 14 and 15 (W, V, 477-541). Points made here are frequently repeated in these and in other, later lectures.

[2] W, V, 477. Cf. pp. 542f (Lecture 16).

Third, How does the Science of Pure Reason get under way? How does it arrive at the Principle? Clearly not by way of *deduction*, replies Schelling, for the Principle sought is itself ultimate and absolute, and any attempt to seek something more ultimate from which to deduce it would be absurd! But the only other possible method is *Induction*, in which reason moves from the particular to the general. Can this method be used here? Whence would come the particulars which lead to the general? Let us see.

A. The Analysis of Being

At the end of the last chapter, Schelling affirmed that the "modes of being which experience affords" are finally to be

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[3] *W*, V, 478

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derived from original differences which belong to the nature of the Existent itself. Now he claims that *these modes or elements* of the Existent *are* "*immediately present to simple observation*!"[4] (As a rule, in what follows, we use "being" for "*das Sein*" - since in using this term Schelling seems to have in mind the unanalyzed character of being - and "the Existent" or "what is" for "*das Seiende*".)

(i) Schelling first discriminates the three elements or possibilities or moments or potencies of the Existent in the following manner:

> "Who could say, for example, that the pure and simple *Subject* of Being (Sein) is *not* the Existent (das Seiende)? Rather must we concede that the first possibility of the Existent is precisely the possibility of being a Subject. For any object whatsoever presupposes that to which it is object. Of course, what exists as subject cannot at the same time and in the same thought be the Existent as object. As subject, Being is posited as deprived - not as deprived of Being in general but as deprived of a certain *mode* (Art) of Being - for how could the whole of Being and even the non-Existent be nothing but subject? To be a subject is one mode of Being, to be an object is another."[5]

The first mode, pure Subject, is also referred to as *das bloss wesende*, *gegenstandliches Sein* and *das bloss Sich seiende*. The second mode, pure Object, is called *ürstandliches Sein*, and *das ausser Sich seiende*. In addition, Schelling can say of the Subject that it is pure "power to be" (Können), for obviously it is not the whole of the Existent but only that which is *able to be* the Existent. This does not mean that the pure Subject is *non-being* (οὐκ εἶναι , Nichtsein), but only that it is *not yet being* though perfectly well able to be (μὴ εἶναι). "Mere

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[4] *W*, V, 470   [5] *Ibid*.

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deprivation of Being does not exclude the power to be." Schelling therefore designates the pure Subject as -A.

> "-A is a potency of the Existent, since it contains what belongs to it, that which must not be lacking, but does not contain that which, outside of it, belongs to complete and perfect Being.... There is nothing which our thinking can posit prior to it; it is absolutely the first thing thinkable (*primum cogitabile*)."[6]

The second thing thinkable is the Existent in which there is nothing of the Subject! That is, we are led next to pure subject-less being (+A) which can exist for itself as little as a predicate can exist without the subject which serves to support it. We now have two moments of the Existent.

> "We cannot posit in one breath, so to speak, the pure subject and its opposite, i.e., the pure subject-less existent. We can only posit the former (-A) first, and the latter (+A) subsequently. In other words, we can posit both only as *moments* of the Existent."[7]

But now it becomes possible to posit a third moment which is *both* subject and object (hence ±A), but each in a different way.

> "It will not be *in part* one and *in part* the other, but it will be each in an infinite way, hence it will be *completely* the one and *completely* the other, not at the same time [as each exists as such] but in the same way; for if it were a mixture, a concretion, of the two, it could be only *an existent*, and hence could not belong to that sphere where *nothing* is *an* existent but where each moment is *the* Existent.... and is infinite in its mode."

> "In this third mode of Being, the Being-in-itself (das in-sich-Sein) does not cancel out the Being-outside-itself (das ausser-sich-Sein) or *vice versa* .... so we can call this third the Being-*by*-itself (das bei-sich-Seiende), that which possesses itself, that which possesses power over itself. (It is precisely this feature which distinguishes it from the two preceding moments, each of which is to be understood as completely self-limited; the one since it is deprived of power-to-be, the other since it is deprived of being)."

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[6] *W*, V, 471 [7] *W*, V, 471

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> "....Now since this third moment is what it is, not for itself, but only in association with others, we can say of it, too, ... that it is only a moment or a potency of the Existent."[8]

These three potencies are capable of co-existing (since no one of them is the others), and mediate one another.

> "They are not three separate existents; rather do they mediate one the other and aid one another reciprocally to be moments of the Existent.... They are not merely compatible (zusammen-sich-Vertragende), as the pre-Kantian metaphysicians said of the most perfect Being, viz., that it united in itself all *realitates compossibiles*; rather do they require one another reciprocally and are true *consentes* - just as the Etruscans said of certain gods that they were born together and can disappear only together."[9]

(ii) But no sooner has Schelling shown the logical structure of the Existent (i.e., of the pure *Idea* of "what is"), than a new question arises. Obviously *the* Existent is not any one of the elements taken separately, nor, conceivably, is it nothing! Is it then constituted by all three elements taken together? Yes, but only in a *material* way, according to its matter (Aristotle), only as the Existent in outline, the mere figure or idea of the Existent and not the Existent itself. What we must discover is "what it is that *is* the Existent." "The Existent, the absolutely general, the Idea itself, requires something or someone of which it can be said that it is the cause of Being (αἴτιον τοῦ εἶναι)", or even the 'subject' of Being. And this something must be the opposite of all that is general. It must be "a real individual being" - determined, to be sure, by the Idea, but at the same time a *thing* (Kant's *Ding*, spoken about but never attained) whose reality is not derived from the Idea

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[8] *W*, V, 471, 472 [9] *W*, V, 474f

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but is independent of it.[10] Consider:

> "Just as each of the moments of the Existent is only *able to be* i.e., only a potency of the Existent , so the whole [-A+A±A] is *the* Existent alright, but the Existent which, in its turn, *is* not but only *can be*. It is the figure of the Existent, not the Existent itself. It is the stuff [or matter: Stoff] of the real Idea, not the real Idea itself.... It shall become reality only if there is someone or something which is these possibilities which exist hitherto merely in thought, as pure noemata.
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> "But this [something or someone] who is these possibilities, cannot conceivably be itself another possibility, for all possibilities are enclosed (*fini*) in what we have called the figure of the Existent, and there remains only that which is not possibility but actuality, and which is related to the possibilities as that which is them. For the totality of possibilities (the figure of the Existent) is the absolutely general and cannot therefore be a self. It is the self-less, and as such it needs someone in whom it has its self. That which does not exist as a self needs something which is for it cause of being.... But this cause of being - and because it is this - is not itself a mode or stage of the Existent. It is not a fourth element or principle to be added to those we already know. It cannot be ranked on the same level as those to which it is Cause of Being. It belongs to a completely different order.... One must say, then, that it is *the Existent itself* (αὐτὸ το ὄν), by which we mean that Being is not here a predicate but the essence itself (Unity of Being - Sein - and Essence - Wesen - in the opposed sense)."[11]

We may put it this way. In the phrase "that which is What is", we may distinguish the "that which is" feature from the "What is" feature. The "What is" feature contains "everything general"; we have called it "the Existent" and seen that it contains three moments and represents the figure or general possibility of Being. The "that which is" feature, however, contains nothing general; it is not a *What*; in fact, "it is a reality which transcends all thought" to such an extent that the "What is" feature seems like "something super-added, something which came along later," an accidental quality (συμβεβηκός). Schelling recalls Aristotle's *Actus* (ἐνέργεια) for which matter was only a contingent property, a mere predicate.[12]

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[10] *W*, V, 474, 495   [11] *W*, V, 595f

Having arrived at "that which is" what is (*das das Seiende seiende*), Schelling searches around for a name for it. Since it is absolutely free of ideas and essence (considered in relation to itself and apart from "What is"), it cannot be *the One*, but only a *Somewhat*, Ἕν τι, a *Dieses*, a τόδε τι ὄν, *das für-sich-sein-Könnenden*, the χωριστόν. Since it excludes from itself everything general and therefore everything material, it cannot be *an* existent, or *the* Existent. It is "is-ness", *seiend*, οὐ τὶ ὄν, ἀλλ' ἀπλῶς ὄν. It is pure reality, and "whatever is further added to it, is due to its relation to the Existent." It is *the Actus* (Aristotle). Hence it is not to be grasped by any concept. One cannot *in general say* what it is, for unlike potency it is not an attribute. "The Actus in general is, properly speaking, not in the concept but in experience." Hence, concludes Schelling, "if one wants to posit what the Existent *is* outside of the Existent and in and for itself..., then one is no longer thinking but ....*seeing* (schauend)."[13] (Schelling avoids referring to the Actus as the Absolute Subject because, strictly speaking, it is *sub-ject* to nothing.)[14]

(iii) A final question for the present analysis remains: How do the Existent and its elements or potencies exist in the primary One? And Schelling replies that they are related to the latter as its attributes or predicates.

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[12] *W*, V, 496 [13] *W*, V, 496-498 [14] *W*, V, 500f

"These differences [within the Existent] are now the differences of this determined One which finds in them its beginning, its middle and its end, by proceeding *from* itself (in its being-in-itself) *through* itself (as that-which-exists-outside-itself) in order to return *into* itself (the eternal being-by-itself). The being-by-itself is the Middle (*Mittlere*) between that which exists in itself and that which exists outside itself .... The determined One is the subject, object and the subject-object, i.e., those elements which could appear to be principles, are reduced to mere attributes of the One which is that which possesses itself in them completely and perfectly - although one cannot therewith conclude that it would not also be this in its being-for-itself. For what it is in a material way, in its being the Existent, it is equally in itself but in an *immaterial* way (ἀσυνθέτως). In the elements, the Unity (Einheit) exists only in the first way [materially]; in the One itself..., the Unity exists in the other way (immaterially) and is indestructible, for it can contain nothing possible, since it is an invincible and indissoluble individuality, an individual essence (Wesen) like no other. The individuality alone is stable; all else is dissoluble. The Unity of the One itself is that which does not disappear with that which is posited in the totality, but survives the latter as a reality which transcends all possibility.

"The elements do not bother one another; that would occur only if one of them was in itself what the other wanted to be. But the difference between them, and hence the being which each of them has in the Unity rests precisely and *only* on the fact that one of them *is not* the other (not *eodem loco*).... They differ only κατὰ στέρησιν. .... It is simply a matter of something not existing in one which does exist in the other.... Real exclusion (as distinct from exclusion in thought) would entail that each wanted to exist for itself. But here each element is rather turned away from itself, -A deriving its power not from itself but from +A, both together deriving their power from ±A, and all three together from that which is the Existent itself. (These elements are excluded as little as the center, circumference and diameter of a circle are excluded from the mathematical point which can be considered a circle *in potentia*.) They are not excluded because *they are not three existents, none claims a being for itself*; instead, each has only the being of that whose attributes it becomes, that to which they are all related as mere predicates. Hence their own being remains merely potential."[15]

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[15] *W*. V, 499-500

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It may be true that in metaphysics nothing is less repetitious than repetition, but in this volume Schelling undoubtedly goes too far. There are no less than eight full-fledged recapitulations of the above points (i - iii), and a number of brief repetitions.[16] But enough has been reproduced to give substance to Schelling's conviction that the search begun by Descartes has now reached its goal. For Schelling is confident that thought, pure Reason, has now arrived at absolutely indubitable Being, the One who is *the Existent* (with its three modes or potencies) and yet the One who *is*, independently of his being the Existent. This primary Being, this πρώτως ὄν, this particular "first that is" before all others (yet having all others in itself as their Cause) - this is the final end of pure thought. Nothing more is to be thought beyond this Being. What is possible by means of thought - that which *can* be thought - *has been thought*. It is the Thing entirely determined by the Idea (of which Kant spoke). It is the object, the Principle in which pure (non-mediated) thought has its goal, and Science its premiss.[17]

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[16] See *W*, V, 470ff (Lecture 12), 484f (Lecture 13), 495f (Lecture 13), 499f (Lecture 13), 508f (Lecture 14), 568f (Lecture 17), 591f (Lecture 18), 670f (Lecture 20). For minor re-statements, See pp 474, 475f, 518, 557, 573, etc.

[17] *W*, V, 501, 502.

B. Methodological Considerations

It is important to take note here of Schelling's lengthy reflections upon his own procedure. (i) First, there is his stress on Negative Potency (the -A) as the starting point of process (and Schelling is happy to think that Coleridge understood the import of his thought). The idea of the most real being (allerrealst Wesen) does not exclude negation as such, since "negation can be as infinite, i.e., as free of negation, as position."

> "One can no more say that there is a negation in pure not Being, in the pure power to be , than one can say there is a negation in the will which does not will and which therefore is as if it were not. Such a will is not limited by negation. On the contrary, it represents infinite power.... But the will which, by its willing, rises into Being, is necessarily an affected and limited will. Pure power does not contradict pure Being. On the contrary: the more pure the former, the more powerful the attractive force of the latter. It is precisely because of the attractive force of pure Being that this pure power to be is the beginning.... Every beginning lies in deficiency. The most profound potency, to which all the others are attached, is the non-existent with its hunger after Being."[18]

(ii) A second point to note is Schelling's insistence that his method is "inductive" and "experiential". This raises two objections to which Schelling must reply. The first objection simply points out that Induction is generally understood to draw its elements from experience and cannot, therefore, be regarded as a way to that certain and definite science Schelling seeks. Schelling entirely agrees with this objection as stated:

> "The idea of philosophy arose only because mere experiience could not be considered a sufficiently certain foundation, and because it was believed that its truth needed itself to be grounded. Even in the most

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[18] W, V, 475f

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> favorable case, that of an Induction executed with the utmost care, the basis remains shaky, not only because it is accepted in a merely arbitrary way, but because it is itself completely arbitrary, and could just as easily 'be' as 'not be' - as we had to acknowledge in the case of the 'I am' of Descartes, which expresses a being which is doubtful not only for me who declare it but also in itself.
>
> "Philosophical consciousness can be compared to the sensibility of the eye which will not tolerate the intrusion of any foreign body. Thus, not only is this Induction not science, but also, if one imagined it possible to pass from the principle thus obtained to deduction, one could never attain anything that could be regarded as Science in the absolutely definitive and unconditioned sense. So strongly do we conceive philosophy to be definitive and unconditioned, that we would rather give it up altogether than cease to think of it as a completely sovereign science."[19]

The point to notice, however, says Schelling, is that it is purely arbitrary limitation to demand that Induction draw its elements from experience. What Inductive method seems inherently to require is not that one proceed from experience as such, but that one "proceed from the particular to the general no matter where this particular comes from."[20] If this is the case, then the "passage through" from the elements of the Existent (-A+A±A) to the Existent itself, is an example of Induction. "Should it be called Induction any the less because its moments are drawn not from experience (in the usual sense) but from pure thought?"[21] The fact is that this is the only kind of Induction that brings certainty, for its status as the product of pure thought means that we can be immediately sure of having omitted no element of complete being.

This reply leads Schelling to reject a second objection, namely, that his procedure is not "empirical". On the contrary, he claims, (dialectical) thinking *is* a genuine form of *experience*:

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[19] W, V, 483 [20] Ibid. [21] W, V, 484

> "That nothing precedes the pure subject (-A) cannot be proved; one must *experience* it. Yes, experience it! .... To be sure, there are those who speak of thought as opposed to *all* experience, just as if thought itself were not an experience. One must *actually* think in order to *experience* the fact that what is contradictory is not thinkable. One must make the attempt to think simultaneously what is refractory to union (Uneinbar) in order to perceive the necessity of positing the *Uneinbar* not at the same time but at different moments, and to win in this way absolutely simple concepts.
>
> "Just as there are two kinds of Induction, so there are *two kinds of Experience*. The one tells us what is real and what is not real: this is experience commonly so-called. The other tells us what is possible and what is impossible: this kind of experience is enjoyed by thinking."[22]

(iii) This leads Schelling to a further reflection upon his procedure. Not only is his analysis of Being "inductive" and "experiential", but it is governed by that "clear and proper law of Reason": the Principle of Non-contradiction. Schelling[23] discusses at length this great "law of all being", the proper understanding of which, he claims, illuminates the nature and relationship of the moments of the Existent. He quotes Aristotle on this Law:

> "Since it is impossible in the same breath to formulate contradictory statements about one and the same thing and still be speaking the truth, it is clear that the opposition cannot exist in the thing itself. For one of the opposed propositions is a privation which implies a negation of a definite kind (of *Being*, for example, not of Being in general.) Hence, if it is impossible at one and the same time truly to affirm and truly to deny something, it shall also be impossible that that about which opposed propositions are formulated should be one and the same

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[22] *W*, V, 508 [23] *W*, V, 487-493

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> thing at the same time. And it is necessary to limit each proposition to a particular Where, or to say that one proposition refers to a particular part (e.g., that black refers to the eye) while the other (e.g., white) refers to the whole."[24]

As hinted at already, Schelling recognizes at least *two kinds of negation*, distinguished in Greek by the particles οὐ and μη. Μη denies the reality while affirming the possibility (e.g., a sun-tanned face which by its nature *could be* white *is* only *non* white, i.e., μὴ λευκόν); or, to put it another way, "μη denies the *actus* without thereby denying the being or the power-to-be of a thing." On the other hand, οὐ denies totally, it denies the reality *and* the possibility, (e.g., "the voice is not white" is "οὐ λευκὸν ἡ φωνή", for not only is the voice not white, it *cannot possibly* be white.)[25]

Now, Schelling points out, whenever Aristotle spoke of the Law of Non-contradiction (viz., "that it is impossible for one and the same thing both to be and not to be at the same time") he spoke only of εἶναι καὶ μὴ εἶναι, never of εἶναι καὶ οὐκ εἶναι. Had Aristotle said the latter, he would have been limiting the principle to purely formal logical contradiction (as Kant would have it), for the "impossibility" involved would be an "eternal" logical one, and the addition of the phrase "at the same time" would be superfluous. But Aristotle's use of μὴ εἶναι made it necessary for him to add "at the same time" - for if one says that it is impossible for a thing to be and not to be, the while affirming, by virtue of the use of μη, that the thing *can* be (later), then one must add "at the same time" to the original statement of the Law. Thus, concludes Schelling, Aristotle (rightly) has not limited this Law to strict logical opposites, but applies it to opposition in the broadest sense.[26]

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[24] *W*, V, 487f (Metaphysics IV, 6). [25] *W*, V, 488f.

These logical considerations are important to Schelling for two reasons. First, because the Laws of Thought are for him the Laws of Being, determining not only the form of knowledge (as in Kant) but the content of knowledge as well. And secondly, because he holds that temporal succession is prefigured in the Idea. "The moments of the Existent behave entirely as phases which can no more appear at the same time than they can exist in the same place."[27]

> "Kant was certainly right in attributing only a formal significance to the principle of Non-Contradiction . But we cannot agree with him that no before or after is admissible in pure thought, for this is to limit thought too strictly and even to suppress it. It goes without saying that in pure thought the succession is purely noetic, but as such it is eternal and therefore indestructible. Just as the three elements of the Existent itself are pure potencies (they are in the sense that they wait for actuality), so the before and after are mere potencies (potentialities). They imply time, which becomes real when pure thought has been transcended. In fact, succession occurs in real time only because it was originally an intelligible, noetic and therefore eternal succession - just as we assume that in Nature the succession must have been pre-determined in the Idea."[28]

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[26] W, V, 490f. Schelling cites Latin usage: "Consider the distinction between est indoctus, est non-doctus and non est doctus. Neither the first nor the second would be used in the case of a new born child.... We would have to say of him non est doctus, for this denies the actuality while affirming the possibility." (p.490) Consider another example: "One can say 'Peter writes', 'Peter does not write'. Of the second proposition, two interpretations are possible. (i) Peter does not write because he cannot, he has never learned how and lacks the ability (power) to write. In this case the first proposition contradicts the second.... (ii) Peter does not write simply because he is not writing, though he knows how. Here there is no impossibility, hence no contradiction....for one has in mind that the two statements are true at different times." (p. 491). [27] p.488 [28] p. 493.

Finally, (iv) Schelling notes the identity of his procedure with *Plato's Dialectical method*.

> "....the way we have chosen to travel in order to discover the principle, agrees precisely with the description in Plato where he shows how the principle can be obtained.... and assigns to this method its appropriate name."[29]

Plato distinguishes two kinds of rational science (a *double intelligible*). In one, the reason makes use of certain sensible or concrete images (as in Geometry) in striving after the pure Intelligible. In the other "nothing sensible or strange intervenes, but pure thought associates intimately with the pure Intelligible." Of this kind, says Schelling, Plato writes:

> "Now learn what I call the other division of the Intelligible, namely, that which *reason itself* touches (οὗ αὐτὸς ὁ λόγος ἅπτεται) when, *through the power of dialectic* (τῇ τοῦ διαλέγεσθαι δυνάμει), it forms suppositions (ὑποθέσεις) which are *not* principles but *truly* mere assumptions (hypotheses), and uses them as ways of attacking and gaining access to what is *not* supposition but rather the beginning of all - the *principle* of all-being. Then, by grasping this beginning and attaching itself again and again to what is connected with this beginning, it (reason) can descend to the end [come down to a conclusion] without using the help of any sensible thing. It has simply set out from pure concepts, progressed through concepts, and ended in concepts."[30]

Obviously, Schelling's Inductive Method and Plato's Dialectic have much in common, and Schelling notes three similarities. First, both are Inductive in the general sense. Just as Plato used hypotheses to arrive at the Principle, so Schelling used what is merely capable of being the Existent,

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[29] *W*, V, 504. The comparison with Plato here runs from p. 503 to p. 517

[30] *W*, V, 505 (from *Rep*. VI 511B).

"that which is the Existent only hypothetically", to arrive at the Existent itself. Secondly, both are inductive in the special sense, namely, that it is reason (thought itself) which forms these premisses or elements which, since they are the immediate and necessary products of pure reason, are "thought correctly and profoundly." Thirdly, in both methods reason finds the premisses by means of its dialectical power and, since Logic is the tool of Dialectic or one aspect of the dialectical method (Plato), the premisses are determined purely by their logical possibility or impossibility.[31] And yet, the dialectical method is "not demonstrative but persuasive." Thus,

> "of what has been thus acquired in and through thought, no proof is possible, except ad hominem. One always addresses oneself mentally to another, leaving it up to this 'other' to come up with something which could be posited prior to the pure subject; but all the time one is certain nothing will be found and no reply given. One proceeds, moreover, without external form, conversationally, (dialogically), whence the name 'dialectical knowledge' which Aristotle resolutely opposed to apodictic science."[32]

Plato tried to reproduce the suspensive character of the dialectical method in his Dialogues, many of which are models and master-pieces of this experimental method. Certain assumptions are set forth, then negated, so that the investigation "constantly oscillates between affirmation and negation, until in the last affirmation, victorious over all, every doubt disappears and there appears that toward which everything tends and which everything anticipates."[33] Such a method is, in fact, an indispensable tool in every kind of investigation, whether it

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[31] W, V, 506f, 510 [32] W, V, 509 [33] W, V, 512

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be intelligent experimentation in the natural sciences or thoughtful determination of the meaning of historical facts. ("The whole of the first part of this study employed the historico-dialectical method"). It is a matter of "testing successively, in an experimental way, all possibilities as they progressively devolve from one another:" for "he who does not consider something possible before he find it, will not find it."[34]

Thus, the dialectical process has a *positive aspect* (the postulation of premisses) and a *negative aspect* (in which the premisses are negated or suppressed or "degraded" to the status of non-principles, mere suppositions, just steps that lead to the Unconditioned). The two aspects are inseparable, but it is in the negative aspect that, strictly speaking, Dialectic is distinguished from Logic.[35] But even this negative aspect is not the last word. For Dialectic takes the elements, now reduced to non-principles, and *transforms* them into attributes of the Principle, "attributes which reason uses to produce science itself without having recourse to any sense-data."[36]

> "Independently of the Principle, the [potencies of the Existent] exist merely in thought, but with the Principle they become, as Plato said, τῷ ὄντι ὑποθέσεις , *actually* possible principles..., attributes of Being. But.... inasmuch as they are thought prior to ~~the~~ Principle (hence purely *a priori*) they are mere subjects or potencies."[37]

> "*That* they are, that they can exist as attributes, they owe to that which is them (i.e., to the Principle), but (and this is of great importance) *what* they are is not

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[34] W., V, 511f

[35] W., V, 509f

[36] W., V, 513

[37] W., V, 514,517f

> determined by the Principle. As far as their what is concerned, they are independent powers. The Principle has for itself the eternity and therefore the necessity of Being. They have for themselves the eternity and necessity of essence (Wesen), of thought. They belong to the kingdom of eternal possibilities, and are truly what has been called the essentiae or veritates rerum aeternae, of which there has been so much abstract discussion since Leibniz."[38]

The Dialectic Process is not a purely noetic one. It is proto-typical of the actual process in nature and history. Schelling holds that

> "if the elements under discussion really have the significance ascribed to them, they must have emerged as principles in the course of the historical evolution of philosophy, or at least in the history of human consciousness in general, for all development takes place progressively.... As far as philosophy is concerned, Aristotle has already drawn attention to the quite analogous succession of principles in Mythology and Philosophy.
>
> "In fact, this successive reduction of the possible principles to the (status of) attributes, which we have considered until now to be a purely noetic process, is a process which is proto-typical of the actual process of progressive emergences (Entstehen) which we observe in Nature; for on what could this step-by-step ascent rest if not on the fact that powers capable of affirming themselves as principles - but which are not principles - are precipitated into the process where they are reduced again to mere steps and transformed into attributes first of that which is above nature and finally of that which is above everything?.... It may be that just a penetrating look at nature will suffice to make credible the simple idea that the whole marvellous spectacle which unfolds there is only a repetition in a real and actual way of the process which we have come to know as an ideal process (Gedankenprocess)."[39]

Hence, if the Dialectical Method can be applied to Nature, to the spiritual world, to everything! - then philosophy must take it with utmost seriousness. It is a notable fact, says Schelling, that this method (discerned in Plato but not taken from Plato) appeared "as soon as the philosophical spirit of modern times cast off completely and forever the yoke of medieval metaphysics" and found itself able "to walk once again the free paths of antiquity." It is the only authentic discovery (eigentliche Fund) of post-Kantian philosophy.[40]

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[38] W. V, 513 [39] W. V, 514, 515

> "A fruitful philosophical activity might restrict itself to the deeper understanding of this method, and a more rigorous and comprehensive application of it in the light of our ever advancing and expanding experience."[41]

For Philosophy exists only for the sake of grasping the Principle. "The ousia, the Substance, the Subject, is precisely the why of Philosophy; it is that for whose sake alone Philosophy exists, that which is entirely proper to Philosophy."[42]

The "failure" of Aristotle to expound Dialectic as an instrument for attaining the Principle, provokes Schelling to lengthy discussion.[43] It is enough here to note his conclusions.

First, Aristotle attacked the inadequacy of the Dialectic and the Sophistic of his time. The only difference he saw between them was that "the latter does not want to arrive at the truth, whereas the former cannot." Both concern themselves only with "the combinations of subjects and predicates, i.e., they move in the realm of appearance and possible illusion."[44] "Their mistake is that they do not go beyond these accidentalities" - indispensable though these essential accidents are to

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[40] W, V, 516 [41] W, V, 516f [42] W, V, 517

[43] W, V, See pp 519-541 [44] W, V, 520 "for truth and error are not in things but only in the understanding."

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demonstration - "in order to arrive at the substance, the thing itself which, in fact, they disregard."[45] In other words, Aristotle's criticism is that Dialectic is not "philosophical."

It is important, however, to see what it is that Aristotle is attacking. The Dialectic of his time seems to have been an inferior kind of thinking which did not go beyond opinion and belief. It was what the majority enjoyed, and was served up by "quite an army of dialecticians who found their starting points and their premisses in mere opinion, without going back to what is accessible to pure thought."[46] It was not the preserve of a particular school, but was basically the phenomenon of individual disputants, each equally right and equally wrong, trying to outdo each other in subtlety and wit. This, according to Schelling, is why Aristotle attacked it, while yet speaking of it vaguely and without naming anyone.[47]

Nevertheless, concludes Schelling, even though Aristotle attacked this inadequate dialectic and theoretically ignored the dialectical method, the fact remains that he granted its usefulness in particular sciences and special investigations, and borrowed from it (far more than is usually thought) in the pursuit of his philosophical activity.[48] Schelling finds in Aristotle the seeds of a higher (Platonic) dialectic:

> "For him, the syllogism is the only mode of scientific demonstration. For Substance, hence also for the Principle, there is no demonstration, but there is another way to make it visible. After all, there are in Aristotle notions and definitions which, applied in a consistent manner, lead to a dialectical method in

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[45] W, V, 524f [46] W, V, 540 [47] Ibid.

[48] W, V, 541. Cf. 520

Plato's sense. We find the seeds of a higher dialectic like that described by Plato, in Aristotle's distinction between that which exists by itself, or subject, and that which does not exist by itself, the συμβεβηκος or attribute; in his distinction between essential and non-essential accidents; in what he calls the causes and principle of all that exists.... which seem to be for him what the ὑποθέσεις are for Plato; and especially in the fact that he designates these (causes and principles) as the _first_ distinctions and oppositions (at the heart) of the Existent."[49]

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[49] _W_, V, 526f. School metaphysics, observes Schelling, went back to Aristotle, to Science, to Dianoia, rather than to Plato, i.e., to reason itself, in searching for a _Gemeinwissenschaft_. (_W_, V, 541).

CHAPTER THREE

COMPLETION OF THE CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS[1]

The goal of Negative Philosophy, Schelling reminds us, is to conceive "God in his pure ipseity" or, to use his other mode of speech, "to isolate the Principle (A^{o})." We have already seen, in our last chapter, how Schelling discovered in pure thought (not in experience and not in psychological facts) that essence and existence are separable, for he was able to discriminate in an immediate way the Existent in its three moments and the Principle which *is* the Existent. But now he enters a new stage of Rational Philosophy. He wishes to make this separate existence of Principle and Existent, as found in pure thought, a matter for "scientific" reflection. That is, the goal of negative philosophy will be reached when God is conceived "scientifically" (mediately, discursively) in His as-such-ness and recognized as the First Principle of all being and becoming.[2]

A. The Absolutely-Absolute: the "Pantheistic" Pre-Supposition

To know the truth about the Principle, says Schelling, is *Nous*, and to know what follows from the Principle is *Science*. Wisdom, then, is Science *and* Nous. It is only in pure thought (Nous) that original necessity resides. All knowledge (Science)

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[1] This Chapter deals with the material in Lectures 16, 17 and 18 (*W*, V, 542-614); and briefly with Lecture 19 (615-638).

[2] *W*, V, 545f.

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mathematical as well as empirical, has a contingent character. Nous, therefore, should precede Science. But it is also that which drives us toward Science, for the Principle strives to be free, to be known as such.

> "The Principle itself strives to escape from pure thought in which it is, so to speak, imprisoned, unable to reveal itself as a principle. It is, of course, in thought, but only materially or essentially, not as such. As such, it is only in potentia, for we possess it, but only through the Existent as its logical Prius to which it is bound. Here then it is rather the Existent which has power over the Principle, and instead of saying that the Principle has (or is) the Existent, the more correct thing to say would be the reverse, viz., that the Existent contains the Principle (which is what Aristotle also said: Metaphysics VII, 16).
>
> "To possess the Principle as such, not merely through the Existent (as intermediary) but free of the Existent, is thus no longer a matter of pure thought, but of that which goes beyond immediate thought; in other words, it is a matter of scientific thought. What was found previously in pure thought now becomes itself the object of thought, and in this sense one can say that the thought which transcends simple and immediate thought is thought about thought."[3]

Now when this (scientific) thought about what was found in (pure) thought "conceives the separate existence of the Principle and the Existent," it discerns that "the Existent posited outside the Principle" (posited, that is, as extra-divine being) and "the Principle posited outside the Existent" (posited, that is, in its pure God-hood) are equally possible. Hence thought is driven to posit a Principle which represents the union of these two as equi-possibilities (Indifference). This Principle becomes, for Schelling, "the Absolute Idea in which God and the World are in like manner comprehended as possibilities," and

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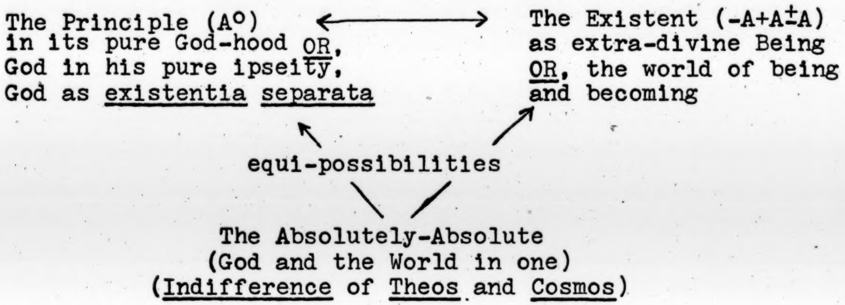
[3] W. V, 546

"to distinguish this Absolute from the Absolute in the merely material sense, i.e., from the Existent", he calls it "the Absolutely-Absolute."[4] Thus the starting point of Schelling's "newly-arisen rational philosophy" is the Indifference, and its matter (Stoff) is the Absolute Idea (God and the World in one). The situation, it seems, can be summarized as follows:


The Principle (A^{o})
in its pure God-hood OR,
God in his pure ipseity,
God as existentia separata
The Existent ($-A+A^{\pm}A$)
as extra-divine Being
OR, the world of being
and becoming
equi-possibilities
The Absolutely-Absolute
(God and the World in one)
(Indifference of Theos and Cosmos)

This notion of the Absolutely-Absolute, into which the divine and extra-divine Existence seem to disappear as into a common abyss, is aptly described, agrees Schelling, as a pantheistic idea. But he rejects the suggestion that his total view is pantheistic in the sense of Spinozism. In Spinoza "we see the Pan alright, because God is the Existent, but we can see no Theism since, for Spinoza, God is only the Existent and not that which is the Existent." For Schelling, Pantheism is simply in principle the presupposition of a scientific Theism. "It is precisely the Science which springs from that Principle which leads us to this goal of a pure Theism, i.e., it leads us to the (conception of) God separated from all other things." God in his isolation, God in his existentia separata; for "it strives to isolate or eliminate everything material and potential which is posited in immediate thought with the first concept of God as universal Being, in order that he might be recognized in his pure ipseity."[5]

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[4] W., V, 548

This "new phase" of Schelling's exposition prompts him to offer a further and more specific historical orientation.[6] Kant, he points out, had shown that an examination of the possibilities and conditions of knowledge is necessary prolegomena to any future metaphysics. But Kant did not abandon the view that Philosophy should be the science of the other sciences, and even seems to reserve a place for a metaphysic. For kant's disciples, however, philosophy was contained in the Critique itself. Fichte raised the Kantian Critique of the limits of knowledge to the rank of a Science, and found the principle of Critical Idealism (according to which the world as we represent it does not exist outside ourselves and is a mere appearance in us) in the Ego. Hence Fichte is to be praised, "for he was the first to emancipate himself completely from purely natural knowledge (which Kant had still kept as the foundation), and conceived the idea that Science is to be the free product of pure thought."[7] But Fichte's enterprize became "lost in total subjectivity and revealed itself as sterile from the scientific point of view:" for Fichte overlooked the inwardly-moving principle he had introduced when defining the Ego as subject-object, and also failed to see that the world of the empirical Ego itself implies the thought of God. His atheism, therefore,

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[5] W. V, 554f [6] W. V, 550-557 [7] W. V, 551

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was simply asserted, not scientifically established. Years befor the writing of this present work, Schelling had advanced beyond Fichte. As he now puts it:

> "If the Ego as absolute principle was the common center of the external world as well as of the internal world which leads to God, there was no longer any reason for still referring to that absolute principle as Ego, a term which had been introduced at the beginning in its purely human significance. It had to be replaced by the abstract but (in the light of what we said above) understandable expression: indifference of the subjective and the objective, which implies that the object (the external world of material existence) and the subject as such (the inner world which leads to the permanent subject, i.e., God) are posited and conceived as being equally possible (in one and the same)."[8]

This was the way Schelling's so-called System of Absolute Identity had expressed itself.[9] He believes it represented a re-orientation of the Kantian investigation. "The whole great apparatus of the Kantian Critique has in the end one purpose: to find an answer to the question as to whether the existence of God can be proved." To that end,

> "Kant summoned all the various faculties which as a whole make up the human reason and cross-examined them. But this meant that his investigation was entirely limited to the subject. The so-called Identity System oriented that investigation toward the objective. It is not a question of how we are capable of knowing God, but of how, by setting out from pure thought, God as such can become an object of possible knowledge."[10]

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[8] W, V, 553 [9] Ibid. Schelling comments: "This name, by the way, was used by the author only once in order to distinguish his system in general and in particular from the Fichtean system which allowed nature no independent existence but made it a mere accident of the human Ego. The name was meant to express the fact that in that totality, subject and object existed over against one another with equal independence, the one being only the subject which has become actualized in the object (for the potencies are indeed subjects), the other being only the subject posited as such. Apart from this purely historical reference, we cannot justify the name; it is too general to mean anything." (Ibid.) [10] W, V, 555f

His present rational philosophy, Schelling believes, finally shows how God can be an object of possible knowledge. Hence it represents "the last phase and objective completion of the Critique which investigates the possibility of metaphysics." In fact, Schelling fulfils his earlier prediction that "a new Dogmatism, more magnificent and more powerful than that old rational Dogmatism, would arise from the ruins of that which had been destroyed by Criticism."[11]

> "The last necessary consequence of the crisis introduced by Kant was the fact that the human spirit entered finally and for the first time into possession of pure rational science, in which there was nothing out of harmony with reason, as was the case in the old metaphysics which, up will the time of Wolff, included such chapters as De Miraculis and De Revelatione. The old metaphysics aimed at being a rational dogmatism, hence its rational aspect could be only of a subjective and contingent nature. It was replaced by the system of an objective rationalism (characterized by a thorough-going internal necessity) which was produced by reason itself, not by subjective reason. It is pure rational science both by virtue of that out of which it creates and by virtue of that which is creative in it. For movement is included in the Existent, but the Existent is only that in which reason has comprehended and materialized itself, the immediate Idea, the figure and form (so to speak) of reason.
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> "Hence the movement inherent in the Existent is a movement of reason. It is not determined by a Will or by any arbitrary factor. God, or that which is the Existent, is the goal of the movement, but not that which acts or wills in it. Rational science will perform its task so much the more perfectly, the further away it places its goal (God) and the more it strives to comprehend everything as far as possible without God, i.e., according to pure logical necessity. For there is in the Existent, i.e., in Reason, not merely the matter (Stoff) but also the law of movement, predetermined in it."[12]

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[11] W, V, 556. Schelling refers back to his Briefe über Dogmatismus und Kriticismus, in Niethammer's Philos. Journal, 1796, and in the Philos. Schriften, Landshut, 1809

[12] W, V, 557f

Schelling's Negative Philosophy is thus an a prioristic rationalism ("because thought unfolds directly in it"), like Mathematics in its concern with the Possible and Intelligible[13] but going beyond Mathematics in that it includes not merely the Existent or the Hylic ("mathematics is entirely comprehended in this"), but also the Principle (that which is the Existent).[14]

B. The Empirical World and its Intelligible Structures - The Potencies as Causes of all Becoming

Still in the interests of "isolating the Principle", Schelling now conceives the merely possible principles (-A, +A, ±A) as raised to the status of reality and as entering into action.

In -A, +A and ±A, there is a passive possibility of becoming real. They receive reality through participation in A^o. But this makes it possible for them to be real in their own right, although, of course, "their self-reality is therefore mediated." Rational Science, however, is concerned with mere possibility, and is therefore "satisfied with the mere possibility that that first potency will emerge out of relative non-being."[15] But how would such a thing be possible? Only by an act of *willing*, answers Schelling. Only a willing could transform the first principle (-A) into reality, and through it all the others. But "by passing over into reality" (Schelling is still speaking conceptually) "the principles become causes in the strict sense."[16]

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[13] W., V, 558f. "In Geometry there is no proposition which means that what is stated really is so, but simply that it cannot be otherwise. The triangle, for example, is possible only in a certain way, whence it follows, of course, that if it exists it will be in that way. It by no means follows that it actually exists.... First Science is like mathematics because of that general character which Aristotle noticed when he said that what is purely potential in a figure (e.g., the relation between the hypotenuse and the other two sides in a right-angled triangle) is found when the activity of thought actualizes that potentiality and recognizes in this way what is dependent on its competence." (p. 558f)

[14] W., V, 560 [15] W., V, 569

> "Since the potency (-A) is related to its own being as a pure power, and since all pure power (Können) is nothing but a *calm willing* (*ruhendes Wollen*), it follows that it will be a *willing* in which the potency is transformed, and the transition is identical with that which each one can observe in himself when he passes from not-willing to willing. The old proposition is here once again in place: the original being is will and will is not merely the beginning but also the *content* of the first emergent being."[17]

Now man, in unrestrained willing, loses the power to will (i.e., unable to direct his will he loses it). In the same way, this first emergent being appears as will-less will, without limit or determination,[18] and necessitates the positing of a second cause (and a third) if we are to conceive the possibility

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[16] *W*, V, 571

[17] *W*, V, 570. This proposition is discussed in Schelling's *Philosophische Untersuchungen über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit*, 1809. (*W*, IV)

[18] "Hence it is completely identical with the Pythagorean and Platonic Infinite (ἄπειρον), which we do not find in phenomenal reality, of course, for all being which is present in the latter is already a being enclosed within limits and cannot be comprehended otherwise. Phenomenal reality, however, contains signs that there is at the basis of all being a ground which is as such limitless and refractory to form and rule - without power over itself and therefore unable to be for itself - the ground and beginning of all becoming, Aristotle's first or material cause." (*W*, V, 570)

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of real process. When Schelling considers the primal potencies as causes whose relations imply a process, he refers to them as A^1, A^2 and A^3. We here condense and summarise his several descriptions of the first three causes.[19]

The first cause, A^1, is the Aristotelian *causa materialis* (the ἐξ οὗ or *causa ex quam*), or the Platonic Unbounded (the matter and substratum of sensible things and of the prototypes or Ideas).[20] It is that which *can be*, *das unmittelbar Seinkönnende*, but as such it "appears only at the end." In the process, "it appears as a being without a subject, hence it is designated by *B* and must be brought back again to A" (the power-to-be in general). Conceived as pure substance, A^1 is, strictly speaking, not a cause at all, since its nature is indeterminate and stands in need of determination.

The second cause, A^2, is the Aristotelian *causa efficiens*, (the ὑφ οὗ or *causa per quam*), or the Platonic πέρας (that which limits, always immanent in that which becomes, positing number and measure and ordering times and movements). It is the pure Existent, that which *must be* (*das sein Müssende*) inasmuch as it is introduced into being with necessity. It is posited only *in potentiam* and raised to the rank of subject by *B*. It confers determination on B. It is related to substance as its *ratio determinans*. It is *pure cause* since it wants and expects nothing for itself.

The third cause, A , is the Aristotelian *causa finalis* (the εἰς ὅ or οὗ ἕνεκα or *causa in quam*). For Plato, this

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[19] *W*, V, 573-577 [20] Perhaps, says Schelling, Plato's ἄπειρον or ἀόρατον signified "the still undifferentiated and chaotic sum of all possibilities we call the Existent." (pp. 574f)

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cause was a mixture of the first two, but for Schelling it is a real and simple (not composite) cause, "at once substance *and* cause, determined *and* determining." Hence it is "*the substance which determines itself*." "It is the true, i.e., the *free* power to be because to be and not to be are the same to it." Furthermore, since the other causes exist for its sake, it is not only that which Is, but that which *should be* (*das sein Sollende*), the one which is destined to be, the one which cannot *not* be.

The first cause is "undefined being" and wills to affirm itself only in being. The second is "defined being" and seeks to lead the first back into non-being. The third is "the being which defines itself" and "oscillates freely between being and not-being", able to be both, and "acting with purpose and intent."[21]

With this third cause Schelling can comprehend a *Becoming*, for it is by this third principle that everything that becomes is determined. Aristotle, unlike Plato, defined this third factor as a *cause*, but he did so on the basis of experience and in an external way, not by virtue of a necessity of thought. (In fact, Aristotle found it difficult to distinguish the third and fourth causes, and also the second and fourth.)[22] From the combined action of these causes "conceived as being in a state of tension" emerge "composed substances (οὐσίαι συνθεταί), things in the literal sense, a world of things."[23]

But now Schelling notes that "we have tacitly assumed a

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[21] *W*, V, 579 [22] *Ibid*. [23] *W*, V, 581

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unity by which the three causes are held together and united in common action" - and this unity seems to represent a fourth cause. Such a fourth cause cannot be man, for man is no more the final term of our inquiry than he is the final term of Nature:

> "Man is not merely the end of Nature, he is also the beginning, the starting point, of a different and completely new world, a world which rises above and goes beyond Nature, the world of knowledge, of history and of the human race."[24]

Nor can the fourth cause be God, for "we experience a natural revulsion toward defining God as one of the causes; rather are we inclined to regard him as the absolute cause, i.e., the cause of causes." We could say: God is the absolutely final cause, for "it is no contradiction to conceive a plurality of final causes, since every sequent is so related to what comes before it." And yet, just as we say of God that He is the Existent, i.e., the cause of its being and unity, so we may say that God is what this fourth cause is; for God actualizes the potencies; He is their That (pure Actus). But Schelling makes this distinction: what God was for the undissociated Existent, the fourth cause is for the dissociated Existent. In other words, the fourth cause is "what the principles are in their separation," hence it is what God is, but it is not God as such.[25]

The name of this fourth cause is Soul and, as we shall see, Schelling speaks of individual souls and of a World Soul. He says the word "Soul" designates "this concept of a being (Wesen) which is Actuality (Actus) not in order to be itself but in order to be something other" or to be the cause of this other's being.[26] He identifies this cause with Aristotle's *formal* cause, the τί ἐστιν or εἶδος, and notes that this cause (the Idea, thought-form, *Urform*, *Logos*) precedes the actuality of formed particular things. The idea of the statue, for example, precedes the actual statue elaborated in matter; the real house emerges from the idea of the house. The form of the statue is what the statue *was earlier*. Just so, the unity of the three potencies is *prior* to the separation of the potencies - as the Idea of the development of the world is prior to the succession of things. The Idea is Prius. [Prior to a world but not prior to Will.] So Aristotle called the Essence or Ground of things - because of this priority - the being which was, τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι, and Schelling concludes that the τί ἦν εἶναι signifies that which, at every given moment, *is* the Existent.

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[24] W, V, 582 [25] W, Ibid.

> "Aristotle says: the τί ἦν εἶναι is each thing according to what *it itself is*, free of everything accidental, hylic and different....
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> "Aristotle referred to that which is the Existent - whether the absolute Existent or the Existent in a definite form - by saying that its nature is τί ἦν εἶναι and he used the same expression to distinguish the fourth cause.... the phrase indicates that which belongs not merely to the Existent as such but what the Existent is by its nature.... Being (*sein*) is the fundamental concept, the nature of the fourth cause.... It is not itself one part of the Existent, but it is identical with the whole Existent. Hence it can enter into things as Soul only to the extent that these things express in themselves the total Existent which, at the inferior stages of becoming still appear as divided and dispersed. In a way, then, one can say that everything is animated (*beseelt*), for nothing really exists as purely material. But, strictly speaking, it is only of organic beings that we can say the soul *manifests* itself among them. But in everything, inasmuch as it contains the *total* Existent (hence also the final cause), it is the immaterial not the material which determines what the thing is by itself."[27]

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[26] *W*, V, 584 [27] *W*, V, 587, 589f

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In *Die Weltalter* (begun in 1811) Schelling had already designated the four potencies, as the world-ordering and world-forming principles, with the word "Soul". Here he repeats the expression, equating it with the Aristotelian τί ἦν εἶναι or Logos. These principles govern all becoming, all movement and all change. They are identical with Aristotle's four causes.[28] The first three together are "the general matter, the stuff of all creation (*Entstehenden*)," although "of the three it is the first which has the most material nature," while the other two are relatively immaterial.[29] But since the latter are destined to be integrated in the first, to actualize or materialize themselves there, the need for *that which is* the three principles, i.e., the necessity for the fourth principle, the Soul, arises. The Soul is related to the first three principles in the way that "a commander in chief is the soul of his army:" "he is that which truly is the existent, since without him the army would be merely material, a crowd without name or cohesion, and it is only because of him that it is something, namely, an army."[30]

> "With this fourth principle, we obtain at once the two great sub-divisions of the world: the organic and the inorganic (*unbeseelten*). And with the four principles in general [re-united] the whole world of ideas is given. By themselves, the principles are simple, *causae purae et ab omni concretione liberae*, but from their unified action there arise *concreta* and, according to the different possible positions of the principles with respect to one another, *different concreta* arise. These *concreta* are called Ideas, for they are formed in a thought which is necessary, to be sure, but yet pure.
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> "In this whole hierarchy (or succession) it is the nature of each idea to find its fulfilment in that which is immediately above it, and what is in the state of

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[28] Note the extent of Schelling's conscious borrowing from Aristotle.

[29] *W*, V, 592

[30] *W*, V, 593

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> actuality in the latter is in the former as mere possibility.... The antecedent has the consequent in itself as mere possibility. Therefore, in the whole ascending series, each member demonstrates that it does not exist for its own sake precisely by virtue of the fact that it is absorbed by a member higher in the series. This fact can be established even by a fairly superficial glance at the phenomenal world, for here we see how the pure material, the stuff and the elements, gather themselves together and grow together into bodies; then how this corporeal level rises to the organic level in the plants, followed by the animals and then by man who occupies the highest place."[31]

And what is the goal of all Becoming? It is God in his pure ipseity. Everything which is becoming, every member of the series, seems to have had impressed upon it a feeling of the vanity of its being-for-itself, and seems filled with a desire to attain that which exists by and for itself. "That to which all becoming aspires is not a general principle.... but an absolutely individual being, i.e., one which is as such pure actuality (Wirklichkeit), unmixed, excluding all potentiality, not entelechy but pure energy, not something immaterial like the soul, but the supra-material." In other words, the whole world of becoming, every thing and every soul, aspires after God as such, and they do so "without knowing or willing it but simply by nature" (i.e., in an eternal way).[32]

This, however, creates a problem - perhaps the problem - for Schelling. For he holds that God as he is in Himself is fully real, and therefore "has no need of that which comes to be in order to be real or acquire more reality." Why then is there a world at all? Why anything? Why not nothing? Schelling asks us to wait for the attempted answer, because we must know God for or by himself if we are to answer this question. Pure rational science, as we have seen, "knows nothing of God other than through the Existent which He *is*."[33] For the moment, we see God in his pure ipseity as "indifferent and impassive" toward the world of Becoming, and the consequent need for an intermediary or middle-member between God-as-such and the world. "If all things and even all souls have only an indirect contact with the eternal, there must exist among them one which realizes in itself the highest perfection, containing completely what is present in the others only in part," and yet one which is at the same time "in immediate contact with the Infinite."[34] This final element, this middle-member, is the World Soul. As the goal of the Existent, it is "related to the totality of the Existent as God is related to the original Existent, and exists for the former instead of God (*instar Dei*). Aristotle calls God the first τί ἦν εἶναι (A^0). Schelling calls the Soul the second τί ἦν εἶναι (a^0).

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[31] W, V, 594 [32] W, V, 594f

With this notion of the Soul - to be further worked out in the next chapter - Schelling completes his sketch of the world of Ideas, a world which is different from God but not cut off from Him, "a world which is extra-divine in the ideal not in the real sense of the word, an *existentia praeterdivina* not *extra-divina*." Of course, "pure Rational Science could always reject the question of the actuality of an extra-divine world, but never the question of its possibility." And it is precisely the

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[33] *W*, V, 600 [34] *W*, V, 595

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World-Soul, declares Schelling, which contains in potency the reality of the extra-divine world.

> "If that which is first in thought (-A) contains the possibility of the ideal extra-divine world, then that which presents itself last in thought [a°] must contain the possibility of the real extra-divine world.... Between God and the Existent, there steps this immaterial aspect [a°] of the Existent (which could not appear before the material aspect had emerged as material). Its appearance, however, marks the end, the conclusion of the Intelligible (the Idea) as such, and God is moved beyond the latter and also therefore beyond pure thought."[35]

The possibility of a truly extra-divine being - one which excludes God completely - is for Schelling inconceivable. But so is the notion of God as cause or author of the extra-divine or anti-divine elements in things. "This He could never be even if (indeed, especially if) one recognizes Him as creator." Kant had held that God creates (wills) only things-in-themselves, in their ETERNAL structure, not phenomena. Schelling agrees: it seems a contradiction to say God subordinated himself to time as a necessary form in order to create phenomena. The World-Soul avoids this assumption, since it is that which mediates to all the others the Being-in-God. "It is thanks to this Soul that all the rest can acquire an eternal being, unless they are of such a nature that they can elude or refuse this mediation."[36]

We may close this chapter, and provide a transition to the next, by stressing Schelling's view of the Soul's dependent and ambiguous character. The Soul does not have a separate and independent existence: "its being consists purely in being the

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[35] W. V, 596   [36] W. V, 597

Existent." But Schelling has earlier said that God is the Existent. The point of difference, however, is that God, unlike the Soul, has a being of his own, "a being which is his independently of the Existent." Rational Science rests on the fact that the Existent is separable from God-as-such; but the Existent is *not* separable from the Soul. In addition, while the Soul is the unity of the Existent and has no being apart from the latter, *it is also related to God* since it is only "*what* God is." It is not God in his ipseity, of course, but it is God *potentially*, and can therefore mediate to all other beings participation in God's being. This dual relationship of the Soul - potentially God and yet possessed of a standpoint independent of God by virtue of its relation to the Existent - affords the Soul opportunity to affirm itself, to be an *Actus* over against God, to "rise above the material in order to become equal with God, separate and for itself," to push itself forward in an autonomous fashion and be as (*wie*) God.

> "Hence we recognize in a^o a double will. According to the one will, a^o relates to God as potency, the Soul becomes that which it should be, namely, a Soul in touch with the divine, and mediates to all the rest entrance into the divine being. According to the other will, the Soul renounces God, refuses to serve as intermediary, and is a Soul which not only fails to achieve its own proper goal but also prevents all the rest from attaining the end it has assigned them: participation in the being of God."[37]

> "Now when Rational Science discovers the possibility of a (real extra-divine world) in the intelligible world, its task then becomes that of following it through its stages....thus pursuing its business of extracting everything which is hidden in the Existent as mere possibility in order to come - after the exhaustion of all the

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[37] *W*, V, 601

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> possibilities - to that which is real in and by itself. Let us now see the consequences which follow if the soul, in contact with the divine, avoids the mediation: first what they are for the material and then what they are for the immaterial."[38]

The Soul's mediation of the intelligible world to the world of matter is thus described in Lectures 18 and 19 by conceiving as starting point the complete absence of Soul. Since the Soul mediates being to the world, its withdrawal, "its elevation to autonomous existence", would mean that the world would fall back into relative non-being (physical materiality).[39] But as we have seen, "everything aspires to exist and to exist for itself" (as God does). This means that a thing wants not merely materiality but extension (i.e., its own space and time) and corporeality (i.e., it wants to be a body, "extension circumscribed on all sides"). But only the Idea is the whole par excellence. Hence, "every object of the phenomenal world shall be a whole only insofar as it is the image of the Idea itself, of the four principles."[40]

Schelling shows us here the extent to which he conceives this world as ordered (pre-ordered). (The non-rational will be discussed later.) "In fact, if spatial simultaneity (outside-one-another-ness) and temporal succession were not, so to speak, pre-organized in the intelligible world, everything here below would be without sense," and we would have random juxtaposition, disorderly succession. Schelling cites "the geological strata superimposed on one another." These are "so regular that we may see in them a reminiscence of the world of Ideas."[41]

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[38] W., V, 604 [39] W., V, 604f [40] W., V, 613

As Soul increasingly preponderates, it "brings to a higher degree of energy that Will, that principle of ipseity, of being-for-itself, hence that independence of the general." "The closer to man, the more contingent and changing is the energy with which each thing affirms itself and which determines its individuality."[42] Here is the fundamental difference between the Animate and the Inanimate (or Inorganic). And yet everything, even the Inanimate, moves toward the Soul "through which each thing participates in the whole and is itself a whole."

> "Even though in its material aspect an inanimate thing does not attain (so to speak) the soul, the latter is none the less the end of its movement, which makes the thing, in spite of everything, a representation or image of the four principles. Only in this way does the thing become a _body_.... Through the material, the corporeal has a relation only to sensation; through the corporeal the material has a relation to thought or spirit. The corporeal has its source, not in the material as such, but in the principles and in the Idea whose action continues effective in the material, and which itself is only a union of principles."[43]

The Soul does not manifest itself in the same way in all organic beings or in all animate beings in general. It presents its different aspects as different phases. "These phases or differences of the soul imply (cause) the differences among living beings according as they are endowed with only one soul, the most inferior, or with all."[44] Schelling calls these soul-phases vegetative or nutritive, sentient, propulsive or moving, and intelligent. The highest phase of the soul is (still following Aristotle) the _noetic_ or _intellective_.[45] It merits the name entelechy [i.e., the immanent substantial form, the formal principle which realizes itself in the activity of the body.]

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[41] _W_, V, 610f [42] _W_, V, 612ff [43] _W_, V, 614

[44] _W_, V, 629 [45] _W_, V, 634f

> "The soul is Actus but not as Actus. It is intelligent but according to the very nature of the thing; material, but without knowing itself to be intelligent. The vegetative soul is sufficient for the plant, but without the intellective soul the animal could not exist any more than it could without the sentient, moving and vegetative souls."[46]

In the foregoing manner, Schelling has been attempting to establish his conviction that there are intelligible structures - knowable by the mind - which find expression in the empirical world. His procedure has been to permit the merely possible principles to enter into action and to become causes of a being which is then divided and ranked in stages as the Ideas themselves are. Hence a series of objects arises, each of which is capable of becoming the object of a particular science - which makes Philosophy the Science of Sciences! With his discussion of the physical aspect of the Soul, this phase of Rational Philosophy is completed. To take up the hyper-physical aspect of the Soul is to enter new territory.

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[46] W., V, 636

CHAPTER FOUR

THE LIMITS OF RATIONAL PHILOSOPHY[1]

A. The Self (= rational will) as divine and anti-divine

When Schelling moves from the physical aspect of the Soul (the domain of the Soul in general) to the hyper-physical or supra-material aspect of the Soul, he finds something completely new: a Will which is "its own act".[2] Aristotle called it *Nous*, not the "passive reason" of the noetic Soul, found among animals as well as men, but the distinctively human *Nous*, a ἕτερον γένος ψυχῆς , which has nothing in common with matter or with the four principles. Schelling calls it *Spirit* (*Geist*), and what Spirit wills is not something outside itself (e.g., the perishable world) but *itself*, i.e., it wills its own will. It is active, self-acting and the creator of Science. Admittedly, Aristotle sometimes calls it "the understanding of the Soul" and refers to it as theoretical reason, but basically he distinguishes it from the Soul:

> "It has no organic connection at all with the other parts of the soul, and all that one can say of it is that it comes to and enters the soul *from outside*, as something foreign to the soul.... Now the other predicates follow naturally: that the Nous alone possesses a separable existence, an eternal and imperishable nature (whereas the passive reason is perishable), that it is unmixed, since it alone exists only for itself and belongs to no genre, that it is without suffering, because it is in its essence *Actus*.... and that it alone is divine."[3]

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[1] This Chapter presents a Summary-Translation of the material in Lectures 20 - 24 (*W*. V, 639-754)

[2] *W*, V, 602 [3] *W*, V, 638

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This Spirit or Nous cannot be part of the intelligible world (the realm of Ideas), and yet it is within the competence of Rational Science to consider it inasmuch as it is something which is not not to be thought.

> "But with this advance, the character of science is changed, since outside of that which pure thought discovers as being in the state of possibility, there exists a reality external to thought, a reality which evolves from now on parallel to the latter and which serves as its proof and verification.... It is to be predicted that this Spirit - which is opposed to the Idea and accidental, i.e., independent with respect to it - will be in the future the only subject to interest us."[4]

When Schelling considers this Aristotelian notion of the sublimity of the Nous, he finds himself confronting a break in the logical progression and perceives we are at the limit of ancient philosophy.

> "It is clear that Aristotle, with his theory of active intelligence, has reached a limit beyond which he ought not to pass. Ascending from the material, he arrives at the same abyss (Kluft) before which Plato had found himself when he wanted to descend from the world of Ideas to the sensible world, and which he had not been able to cross. This astonishing co-incidence shows us that we are here at the limit of the possibilities of ancient philosophy...."[5]

If, however, the possibilities of ancient philosophy are exhausted with Plato and Aristotle (all further efforts being "digressions and diversions"), Schelling himself feels sure he can move beyond Aristotle in specifying the essence of Nous, or Spirit, as Will. True, Aristotle saw that the energeia, wherein he perceived the essence of the Nous, excludes everything potential, hylic and general, and that, as what is most personal in us, the Nous is divine and like God. But he did not

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[4] W. V. 603, 602 [5] W. V. 643

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see that the human spirit as its own act rises at the same time against God and sets itself over against him. He did not see, so to speak, the Fall of the Spirit. Schelling, however, insists: "being divine without being God, the Geist is at the same time designated as the anti-divine....and the anti-divine is whatever is capable of taking the place of God."[6]

(i) What does it mean to call the Spirit "Will"? Schelling does not have in mind a will that wills something, but simply "the will which wills to preserve the freedom of its will instead of taking it prisoner and positing it as mere potency," or "the will of the soul aspiring to breadth and freedom." He claims, furthermore, that a full and profound psychological analysis can show how, from this original will, one ends up with the Aristotelian intelligence.[7]

In clarification, Schelling distinguishes "the will which wills only itself" and the will which is thus willed; in other words, the original will and the willed will. It is the latter which is truly Spirit, self-consciousness (or self-knowledge), the "I am". But the original Will, the Act whose consequence it is, "detaches itself from it and assumes in relation to it the character of a fateful and inscrutable Will."

> "This is the Spirit which no longer wills in an isolated and ephemeral way, but in an eternal and permanent fashion and forms the inner, indestructible ground of all free will. For what the first will willed to preserve in the conscious Spirit is freedom and will, and it is in the conscious Spirit that there resides the will which is the sole reason for its being."[8]

The Spirit seeks understanding so that it can suppress all opposition to its willing - an opposition which is a consequence of the primal Will. Hence the Spirit _is_ not understanding, but _becomes_ understanding.[9]

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[6] W, V, 642 [7] W, V, 643ff [8] W, V, 644

The Will, concludes Schelling, simply _is_. As "the beginning of a totally other world posited outside the Idea," one cannot say it is necessary but just that it _is_. It is the original accident (_Urzufall_), since "it has no cause outside itself" and since it is that "from which everything else that is accidental derives." Thus with this first accidentally actual Soul (i.e., with this birth of individuality) all other souls become possible:

> "This Soul in which the Will has arisen, is now no longer equal to the Soul in the Idea. It becomes, because of that Will, the individual soul, for it is precisely this will that constitutes its individual element. But with this first accidentally actual soul, there is posited an infinite possibility of other souls on an equality with the first: individual souls, each of which occupies, according to a pre-established order, the place which comes to it in the series of wills, i.e., the series of acts through which each posits itself, and with itself, the world outside the Idea."[10]

From the foregoing devolves this truth: "that the I of each one is such.... that the unfathomable act by which this I expresses itself is at the same time the act by which this world - the world outside the Idea - is posited for it."[11] This result can be called _Subjective_ Idealism inasmuch as it presupposes the world in the Idea, but it is not subjective in the Fichtean sense, for inasmuch as Schelling has restored the immanent reason which indwells things and found again the intelligible connections among things, his Idealism may be called _Objective_: "it deals with real ideas (ideas of things) and not with abstract concepts."[12]

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[9] _W_, V, 645 [10] _W_, V, 646 [11] _W_, V, 646

> "Since antiquity, the philosophical spirit has made no conquest comparable to that of Idealism as Kant first introduced it. To characterize it, however, one could do no better than cite these words of Fichte: 'That whose essence and being consist purely in the fact that it posits itself, is the Ego; such as it _is_ it _posits itself_, and such as it _posits_ _itself_ it _is_."[13]

This identification of Schelling's _Geist_ with the Aristotelian _Nous_ and the Fichtean _Ego_ - where each term is taken to refer to the same most personal and authentic individuality, the same active, self-conscious reason, the same principle of self-hood - reflects a view which affirms the personal continuance of the human spirit (not "the immortality of the soul") after death, although in Aristotle's case the completely worldly orientation of his philosophy seems to have prevented his closer examination of this question.[14]

(ii) Schelling also moves beyond Aristotle in recognizing the anti-divine character of the Spirit. Aristotle missed this because the Nous, for him, had significance only relative to the soul and not to the world. But the divine and the anti-divine in the Spirit cannot be separated, as is revealed by the appearance of _Prometheus_ in Greek mythology and the presentation of his tragic fate in Aeschylus.[15]

> "Prometheus incarnates (_ist_) from one side only the principle of Zeus himself, i.e., the divine in relation to man, a divine principle which is the cause of his intelligence (_Verstand_), a principle by which he is endowed with something he lacked in the previous world order, just as, according to Aristotle, the human _Nous_

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[12] _W_, V, 647f [13] _W_, V, 648 [14] _W_, V, 650-657 [15] _W_, V, 663-8

> was not foreseen in any of the previous stages but came to man from outside. But over against the divine, Prometheus is Will, invincible Will, immortal in relation to Zeus and, therefore, capable of resisting God."[16]

> "Prometheus is not a human invention. He is one of those original thoughts which force themselves into existence and develop according to a strict logic when they find, as Prometheus found in Aeschylus, a profound spirit, a favorable soil (in which to take root). Prometheus is the thought in which the human race, after it had brought forth from within it the whole World of the Gods (Götterwelt), returned to itself and became conscious of itself and of its own fate (having taken account of what is baleful and fatal in the belief in the gods."[17]

Prometheus is thus that principle of humanity Schelling has called Spirit. He gave understanding and consciousness to the soul. He defied God by stealing the heavenly fire and bringing it to man. This fire is the free - because rationally ordered - will through which man is saved from blind will. And man, his will thus transformed by reason, is able to develop his literature, arts and sciences.[18]

The most enigmatic aspect of the story, in Schelling's view, lies in the attitude of Zeus. When the world attained the epoch of Zeus, the latter found himself in the presence of a human race born independently of him, and considered replacing it with a new race. But his intentions were anticipated by Prometheus' act. Therefore "his condemnation of the deed of Prometheus was not absolute and something in him prevented him from opposing it absolutely." Zeus himself had conquered the blind cosmic forces only by the power of his spirit, and it is with the help of Prometheus that he organized his new empire. "But this doesn't stop Zeus from reacting with violence and giving free course to his unmerciful anger!"[19]

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[16] W., V, 663 [17] W., V, 664 [18] W., V, 665f

In his sufferings, Prometheus is "the sublime prototype of the human self." Prometheus Bound contemplates without hope the irreparable and irreversible rupture caused by his act and its consequences. And Schelling, at this point, recalls Kant's doctrine of "a radical evil inherent in human nature."[20] Prometheus, however, was in the right. He could not not do what he did. He was under a moral necessity. And herein lies "his tragic dignity". For "the truly tragic misfortune is not that which results from a voluntary act, but that to which we are driven by a moral necessity." Prometheus was therefore "in his right", although this did not prevent Zeus from inflicting continuing tortures upon him. But Zeus was "in his right" also, for only thus could he safeguard his independence and freedom. "We cannot resolve this contradiction," concludes Schelling, "we must simply try to express it adequately."[21]

Thus, the destiny or fate of the world and of mankind is, by nature, a tragic one. The act to which we trace back all suffering did not happen once, but happens always, eternally. Aeschylus was the first to grasp this tragic element at its source. He could not help but show Prometheus in his inflexible arrogance and open hostility, nor did he hesitate to show Prometheus overwhelmed and crushed with all griefs and sufferings by Zeus. If Aeschylus had played down the punishment, he would have offended his people and lessened the fear with which God inspired them. He believed that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom; and, for that matter, that fear of the State would keep man just.[22] Prometheus would not be what he is if all had happened in accordance with his will. The consequences for him are those which devolve upon all irreducible opposition to God. And the cruelty of Zeus has its reasons in the unfathomable right of Zeus to original Being, for he is the last-come of the Gods, the inheritor of those who preceded him. As blind being, He is prior to, and therefore beyond, all reason and without knowledge of good and evil. Hence, in relation to the reason which comes later, He is just force and violence (Kratos and Bia).[23]

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[19] W, V, 665f [20] W, V, 665 [21] W, V, 667

B. Toward Existential Despair and the God Who Acts

We now stand at the first of two great turning points in Schelling's presentation of pure Rational Philosophy, for he has now conceived the Self - the "ungrounded act of egoity", the active rational will - as excluding itself, by its own act, from the world of Ideas and setting itself over against God. It is therefore the Self which now becomes the principle of all further development. As will willing itself, the self is outside the world (Ausserweltlichkeit) and anti-divine (Gegengöttlichkeit), and how to deal with it, how to reconcile it and subordinate it to God, is the last problem for negative philosophy to consider. We now do so, remembering the final goal of Rational Philosophy, namely, "to envisage the Principle" not only as free of all attachment with the Existent but as "triumphant and victorious

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[22] W, V, 668 [23] W, V, 668

over all."[24]

Happiness for man, says Schelling, is to be found in the conquest of the spirit's basic character of self-will.[25] The spirit can choose to give itself freely to God or draw the world to itself. If the latter, it is absorbed by the world; it doubts, fears, hates what is hidden from it (but apprehended by reason and clarified by philosophy): it becomes the soul in perdition, anguished, lost in a state of ceaseless death. But those who live detached from earthly life, free of all relation with the extra-divine and oriented toward the divine, will become, with all the riches of acquired consciousness, pure potency in relation to God. Such are the truly happy ones. In fact, Schelling explains the word *makar* as consisting of the negative particle *ma* and the syllable κηρ (κεαρ) meaning "heart", i.e., the seat of will and desire, the proper self. Thus the spirit which turns toward God and again becomes soul, is rightly called blessed (*makar* or *makarios*), "for in him the *kear*, this eternally craving will, this fire which never dies, is again brought to rest."[26]

After a further discussion of his epistemology (emphasizing that "the part of the soul turned toward the world" has as its sole object not God but the Existent)[27] Schelling considers the theory of knowledge in the *Practical* Philosophy and discusses

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[24] *W*, V, 671. We note that the *causa sui* is also, of course, the Principle, for both Spinoza and Fichte. But for Spinoza it excludes all self-consciousness, all willing and knowing, while for Fichte it consists essentially of nothing else.

[25] *W*, V, 650-657 [26] *W*, V, 656 [27] *W*, V, 698-711 (lecture 22)

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the Moral Law[28] and the State[29] in relation to the individual.

The Moral Law is independent of God (and may be compared with the Δίκη of the ancients), for Schelling holds that an ethical reason indwells the potencies of the world and that it may be regarded as independent of divine revelation and of all authority grounded thereon. This ethical world-reason stamped on the community of men in the form of its constitution, in the legal order of sovereignty and subordination, is the *State*.

> "This outward rational order, equipped with coercive power, is the *State* which, taken materially, is a pure fact and has only a factual existence but one sanctified by the law living in it, a law which is not of this world, nor of man, but *derives directly from the intelligible world*. The Law which has become actual power is the answer to that act by which man posited himself outside reason: this is the reason in history."[30]

Here Schelling enters the area of Practical Philosophy in which the self is no longer in its own power but is compassed by Law, i.e., by a power strange to it. Law arouses an aversion for itself among men, and provokes hostilities among them. It is thanks to the State that conflicting opinions are kept in check and the possibility of any Hobbesian "*bellum omnium contra omnes*" negated.[31]

Throughout history, State and society have entered into a variety of reciprocal relations, thus giving rise to different forms of the State.[32] But it is enough for us to note Schelling's conclusions. The State, he says, is not history's goal, and it is not the product of freedom. It is, however,

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[28] *W*, V, 712ff, 735-739 [29] *W*, V, 715, 716-734

[30] *W*, V, 715 [31] *W*, V, 718-721 [32] *W*, V, 723-730

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the first condition of freedom and the means to an end. It is thanks to Christianity that the State becomes a means not an end; and the individual has the task not of abolishing the State but of inwardly transcending it.

> "The State is not the final purpose. Hence the establishment of the most perfect State is not by any means the goal of history.... A perfect State in this world is as impossible to obtain as a perfect man, and to hope for such a thing is apocalyptic and chimerical .... The task of the State is rather to provide for the individual the greatest possible freedom (autarkie), a freedom which is exercised above and beyond the State (so to speak), but does not react upon the State and is not exercised within or against the State."[33]

The individual can come to terms with the State and relate to it quite passively, for "no one is obliged to obey the State." But when it comes to the Moral Law, the situation is very different: "the moral law demands an absolute obedience."[34] Hence Schelling begins the last "lecture" (Number 24) of his Philosophical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology with a consideration of the Moral Law,[35] and its relation to the Individual who "goes beyond the State" and "in whom the factor of progress and development resides." The Law of even the most powerful State is limited to dispensing "external justice, i.e., positive justice limited to the facts." The Moral Law, however, is inward, inscribed on the hearts of men, and will make its presence felt even if the State completely disintegrates. In fact, the Law of the State is only "the consequence of that inner constraint", so we may set it aside.[36]

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[33] W, V, 732-734 [34] W, V, 735 [35] W, V, 735-739

[36] W, V, 736

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We must note, first of all, that the Moral Law is a power distinct from God and that it hides him. To be sure, Ethics and Jurisprudence are rational enterprizes and, in an ultimate sense, owe their existence, as does reason itself, to God. But what Schelling is saying is that "it is wrong to represent the Moral Law as divine and to mix God in with natural right." We cannot reduce all morality to theology. To subordinate everything to religion would make any rational moral doctrine or legal science impossible. The truth is that "God is hidden by the Law," which must be so if the Law is to perform its work of education, rectification and correction.[37]

But now it becomes clear what is in store for the individual who eludes God. "Separated from God, he is taken captive by the Law, as by a power distinct from God." For the Law is woven into his will, it is embedded there, so that he cannot escape it or rise above it. His natural feeling toward the Law is therefore one of aversion and hostility.[38]

For its part, the Law is general and impersonal and therefore imperfect. As a rational force it ignores personality. It shows no mercy for our weakness or gratitude for our obedience, and "this impersonality is the root of the imperfection which is in the Law itself." Kant did not take this imperfection into account; and men generally have sought to deny it by claiming that the Law is willed by God. But the imperfection is there, and may be asserted on three counts: (1) "The Law cares only

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[37] W., V, 736n [38] W., V, 736

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for the community and nothing for the individual; it speaks to the individual only in order to act on the community." (ii) "It does not tell the individual what he is to do, and is therefore purely negative." (iii) It prescribes a morality without purpose, so that when I have fulfilled the Law I have gained nothing. We must conclude, then, that the Law is secondary and subordinate. Its end lies in something else and "when this something else is present, the Law ceases to exist in this imperfect form (the *telos* of the Law is Christ: Romans 10:4)"[39]

Clearly, thinks Schelling, it is the "form" of the Law rather than the content which arouses man's dislike. "Being ordered around would not be so irritating to the individual if the orders issued from a person; but when they come from an impersonal source, the self finds this insufferable." "The self wants to be absolutely free."[40] Some persons may find an intellectual delight in discerning the rational character of the Law, and yet that very act will disclose in the Law "the threat of death." For man sees not only that he is incapable of fulfilling the Law, but that "the Law is powerless to give him what he lacks, namely, a right inner attitude (*Gesinnung*)."[41]

> "The Law is powerless to give man a heart which is equal to the Law. ('But no one possesses such a heart, for it is the Spirit of God which makes man *equal* to the Law and causes him to accept the Law with a joyous heart:' Luther) On the contrary, it reinforces the tendency to evil (*der Sünde Kraft*) and instead of doing away with the inequality between itself and man, it emphasizes it ever more strongly....so that in the end *all* moral action seems reprehensible and the whole of life seems

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[39] *W*, V, 736n [40] *W*, V, 736, 737 [41] *W*, V, 737

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> full of flaws. Of course, spontaneous virtues embellish and ennoble life, but at bottom the seriousness of the Law remains and deprives man of all *joie de vivre*."[42]

The Law thus becomes a curse, and man, completely discouraged, begins to feel the nullity (*Nichts*), the non-worth (*Unwerth*) of his whole existence. "But precisely here where the purpose of the Law - the negation of the individual self - is as good as attained," the self discerns a new possibility. Perhaps it can escape by ceasing to be an active person, by withdrawing into itself and surrendering its own self-hood to God!

> "In doing this, its only intention is to escape the unfortunate consequences of action and the pressures of the Law by fleeing for refuge into the contemplative life.... But in passing thus from the active (practical) life, the self *steps over to God's side*. Without knowing anything about God, it seeks a divine life in this Godless (*ungöttliche*) world. And since this search occurs in the renunciation of that selfhood by which the self had cut itself off from God, it succeeds in coming again into touch with the divine. In other words, the spirit which draws itself back into itself, frees the soul and gives it space in which to move. But the soul, by its very nature, is that which God is able to touch. It is the truly θειον element in its nature which here manifests itself, though this occurs not in the species but *only in the individual*....for only the individual has a direct relation to God, only the individual can *seek* him and receive him when he reveals himself."[43]

Even in the fallen state, man retains the capacity for returning to God. Schelling calls it "a potency inherent in the spirit" which "awaits only a favorable moment to actualize itself." The essence of a^{o} manifests itself when everything accidental in it (everything which denies God) has been

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[42] *W*, V, 737 and 737n [43] *W*, V, 738 and 738n

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destroyed. "By entering into the contemplative life, the self finds God again. God once more becomes objective for him but of course, as we shall see, only as Idea."[44]

This rediscovery of God has different stages which Schelling views as so many stations on the return path to God. These stages are Mystical Piety, Art and Contemplative Science.

> "In the first stage the self seeks to accomplish the act of self-forgetting, abnegation of itself. It is represented by that mystical piety whose meaning we find most clearly expressed in Fenelon and which consists in man seeking to negate but not to annihilate (*zu vernichtigen*, *nicht zu vernichten*) himself and everything that is purely accidental about his existence.... In his *Demonstration of the Existence of God*, Fenelon speaks of this suppression of selfhood as an 'abandoning of the will', and says of this mystical piety: '....The one thing that is truly yours is your will. It is this of which God is jealous. For he has given it to us, not in order for us to preserve it and dwell in it as sole owner, but in order that we should give it back to Him completely, just as we have received it, keeping nothing back.... else we would commit a larceny against God.'
>
> "The second stage is represented by the *art* by which the self makes itself like (ὁμοιωσις) the divine, by creating a divine personality, and thus seeks to penetrate through to the latter; the art which creates sources of ecstacy and ravishment, when the spirit becomes soul (in completely self-less production) - which happens only to those who create the highest art, not that they know or understand it, but by virtue of the true determination of their nature.
>
> "The third stage is represented by *Contemplative Science*, in which the self rises above practical and purely natural (dianoetic) science and enters into contact with that which exists for its own sake. The spirit, withdrawing into itself, renouncing the practical, attains here the pure *thea* in which it is in direct contact with the Intelligible, and hence the Nous establishes the same relations with the *Intelligible* as the sense has with the Sensible.... It is to be noted that [Schelling's] Rational Philosophy, like Contemplative Science, itself enters here as a moment of the development."[45]

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[44] *W*. V, 739

[45] *W*. V, 739f

In these passages Schelling has described what the individual can attain "who seeks to abandon this unhappy life and make himself happy *in his own world*." Just as Art and Science are here negative stages on the way to happiness, so "Poetry (Homer) and the Plastic Arts (Phidias) were considered by the Greeks as means of liberation from the legal State and legal religion."[46] But the problem is that these ways lead to a purely *ideal* relation with God. "Contemplative Science leads not to the real, actual God but to the ideal, essential God," to the concept of A^o in its pure self-being. "This is the point at which the old philosophy ended: God as the final cause," the Unmoved Mover, νοήσεως νόησις , God as the infinite act of thought, God who thinks himself with no limiting object outside him. And such a God is of no help to man.

> "Even if Aristotle had attributed to God an existence, it would have been *as if He existed not*, for He can do nothing, initiate nothing. It seems inconceivable that the negative aspect of this definition in Aristotle as well as in modern philosophy has escaped notice. It deals with a Spirit according to its essence, an ideal Spirit, a Spirit which possesses itself without being able to be absent from itself; but it is a misuse of language to call this Spirit Absolute Spirit."[47]

Basically, then, these "ways to God" fail to speak authentically to man's existential despair. The individual needs a God who Acts freely and graciously on his behalf.

> "The self can be content with this purely ideal God only if it is able to remain in the contemplative life. But this is impossible. The renunciation of action cannot be final and irrevocable, for the self *must* act. But as soon as one re-enters the active life, reality begins to affirm its rights, the ideal (passive) God can no longer be reached, and the earlier despair reappears, for the conflict has not been removed. Accordingly, the question is: what is any longer possible for the self, and where shall it turn?"[48]

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[46] *W*. V, 740

[47] *W*. V, 741

[48] *W*. V, 742

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C. God (the essentia Actus) as κρεῖττον τοῦ λόγου and the Transition to Positive Philosophy

In the remainder of Lecture 24, Schelling reflects upon the accomplishment and limitation of Rational Philosophy, the nature and task of Positive Philosophy and the transition thereto, and the whole new meaning given to the question of the demonstration of God's existence.

It is clear that the goal of Rational Philosophy has been attained. Its task was to isolate the Principle (A^0) as such, supreme, and free of the Existent. We witnessed the separation when "the ego, in affirming itself, became the point of departure for an extra-divine world which excludes God." But now we have seen "the self declare itself a non-principle and subordinate itself to God," i.e., we have seen A^0 emerge as unique, separate and triumphant over all.[49] Hence, it can be said, Rational Philosophy has reached its goal and limit. It has "put the Principle in evidence, displayed it; but it cannot actualize it." Hence we call it Negative Philosophy, says Schelling.[50]

> "Important and indispensable though it is, it can know nothing of what alone is worthy of being known or of what can be derived from the latter. It posits the Principle only through elimination, hence in a negative way. Of course, it deals with the Principle as the only reality, but it has it only in concept, as mere Idea. And since, in seeking the Principle, it investigates only the possibility of a philosophy, it has a critical character (as in Kant).
>
> "....Everything it knows, it knows as independent of and outside of all existence, and as subsisting merely

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[49] W, V, 742f [50] W, V, 744

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> in pure thought. To be sure, one deduces existing things in this science (otherwise it would not be a rational, i.e., *a prioristic*, science, for there is no *a priori* without an *a posteriori*), but what one deduces is *not that things exist*."[51]

Clearly, then, in tearing the Principle from its potentiality (where it was first discovered in pure thought) Schelling has *not left* the realm of thought. He did not give the Principle existential status outside the Idea, but did reveal or confirm that the *nature* of the Principle is "the *necessary nature* (*natura necessaria*), that which is in essence Actuality (*essentia Actus*)."

> "God is now outside the Absolute Idea in which He was lost, and is in *his own idea*, but still in the Idea, still merely in concept and not in actual Being.... For everything is enclosed in reason in this science; even God is so enclosed, even though He is now conceived as that which is not included in reason (i.e., in the eternal Ideas). And even though, as Kant said, every existential proposition is a synthetic proposition, i.e., one by which I go beyond the concept, the fact remains that this has no application to the pure *That* [does not apply to pure existence] , free of everything general, which is the final outcome of rational science, for the pure abstract That [the proposition which enunciates pure, abstract existence] is not a synthetic one."[52]

In moving from Negative to Positive Philosophy, then, two things must happen. First, the Principle is posited as pure act or being in an existential sense, i.e., it is "*expelled* from the Idea," freed from the Idea in which Negative Philosophy enclosed it. And secondly, the relation between the Principle and the Existent is *reversed* or inverted, so that A^0 can become a true beginning, the Prius of the Existent.[53] As Schelling puts it:

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[51] *W*. V, 744, 745 [52] *W*. V, 745 [53] *W*. V, 746f

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> "We call (this) other science *Positive* because it sets out from Existence (*der Existenz*), i.e., from *Existence* as *actual* actuality (*actu* Actus-Sein) [not merely conceptual actuality].... What is *essentia Actus* is posited out of its concept, so that it is *the Existent* not merely *essentia* or *natura* but *actually*.... It is posited truly, literally, as *beginning*....(Positive Philosophy) knew it first only as a pure *That*, from which one proceeds to the concept, to the *What* (i.e., to the Existent), in order to lead that which exists in that way to the point where it *reveals* itself as real (existent) Lord of Being (i.e., *Lord of* the World), as real and personal God.... All other being, as far as its *existence* is concerned, is explained as having its source in that first *That*; hence there is established a positive system, one which explains reality (*Wirklichkeit*)."[54]

Whereas "Idealism explains not reality but the mode of reality," Positive Philosophy begins with this supreme existential act, passes to the concept or nature of God, and shows that He is not merely an essence or an impersonal Idea but a creative personal Being, the actually existing "Lord of Being (i.e., Lord of the World)". Positive Philosophy is thus connected with the notion of God as a personal Being. Negative and Positive Philosophy are thus "separate and distinct" and yet they form a unity, for "Philosophy is *one*."

> "It is philosophy which both *seeks* its object and possesses its object and brings it to knowledge. Strictly speaking, positive (Philosophy) is implied in the Negative (Philosophy); it *is* in it, not yet as real but just as seeking itself - as this whole exposition, which now comes to its end, has shown.
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> "The struggle between Negative and Positive Philosophy fills the whole history of philosophy.... and the discussion of this opposition would require a whole new series of lectures."[55]

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[54] *W*. V, 746, 745

[55] *W*. V, 746. [Note: Professor Richard Kroner's trilogy provides such a series!]

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How, specifically, is the transition - the expulsion and the reversal - effected? Granted their opposition in unity, how do we move from negative to positive philosophy? Not by thinking, for this is concerned with essences and necessary logical deductions. Our need is for "something outside necessity, something willed."

> "Rational Science actually leads beyond itself and urges this inversion. But this latter cannot arise from thought; a practical impulse is required.
>
> "It must be a will which is the cause of A^0's expulsion from reason, an expulsion which is the last crisis of rational science.... The first crisis had consisted of the elimination of the self from the Idea which, of course, modified the character of rational science but did not destroy it. The last great crisis, the true crisis, consists in the fact that God, finally discovered, is expelled from the Idea - an act which meant the abandonment of Rational Science."[56]

To sum up: Negative Philosophy ends "with the destruction of the Idea", just as Kant's *Critique* ends "in the humiliation of reason." The final word of Negative Philosophy is that "what truly exists is that which is outside the Idea; the truly Existing is not the Idea but what is more than the Idea, κρεῖττον τοῦ λόγου ."[57] The Transition to Positive Philosophy is effect by "a will which demands with inner necessity that God should not be a mere idea."[58] And Positive Philosophy begins with an initial affirmation of the divine existence, based on an act of faith demanded by the will.

But does not this bring us right into the realm of religion as such? To be sure it does, explains Schelling. As we saw, the self seeks liberation from the futility of existence

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[56] *W*. V, 747f [57] *W*. V, 748 [58] *W*. V, 747

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by following the "ways to God" already discussed. But sooner or later the failure of moral action and disillusionment with the contemplative life reduce the self to final despair, "for only now does it recognize the abyss which separates it from God, and see how all moral action rests on the Fall from God." Conscious of his fallen condition, longing for peace and healing, the self sees that his alienation from God can be overcome only by God's personal activity.

> "This is why the self henceforth longs for God himself. It wants to possess Him, Him, the God who acts, the God who is Providence, the God who, as himself a positive, factual Being, can oppose the fact of the Fall, the God who is Lord of Being (not transmundane only, as is the God who is final cause, but supramundane). In this God alone does the self henceforth see the real supreme Good.... The God who is above and beyond reason can do what reason cannot do; He can make the self equal to the Law, i.e., free the self from the Law."[59]

"Person seeks person," declares Schelling, and the faith which lies at the base of his Positive Philosophy is faith in a personal creative and redeeming God, not the ideal moral order of Fichte or the absolute Idea of Hegel. "The self, itself a personality, requires and demands a personality, a person - one who is outside the world and above the general - who will understand him and possess a heart like his own."[60]

Does all this mean that God exists just because we, in despair, declare him to exist? That this is not Schelling's view will be clear when we see what he means by "religion" and by the statement that "God exists".

On the one hand, our willing of God is not arbitrary, but arises from a thoroughly practical need. "It is a willing of the spirit which, by virtue of an inner necessity and a yearning for its own liberation cannot remain with a God enclosed in thought."[61] But on the other hand, "the self cannot itself lay claim to the power to win this God. God must come to meet the self with his aid."

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[59] W, V, 749 [60] W, V, 751

> "The self can will Him and hope to participate in a happiness which, since neither moral action nor the contemplative life have been able to eliminate the abyss, will not be a merited beatitude, nor even a proportionate one (as Kant wants), but an unmerited and therefore incalculable, superabundant happiness. ....If happiness were always proportionate, this would be a source of eternal discontent. Hence all we can do (and no philosophical pride can or should keep us from doing this) is gratefully to accept that which comes to us undeservedly and (as a gift of) grace, and which we cannot attain otherwise."[62]

Thus, for Schelling, "religion" presupposes three things: (a) man's longing for the true God and for salvation, (b) the existence of an active personal God (not an object of contemplation) who comes to meet the individual person, and (c) a reconciliation of the individual to God and a real relation between the two in which the self discovers the joyousness of existence as the free gift of divine grace.[63] If this is Positive Philosophy's concern, then it is no mere repetition of Kant's theory of moral or practical faith.[64] Schelling has moved beyond the limits of pure reason with its exclusion of genuine religion:

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[61] W, V, 751 [62] W, V, 749 [63] W, V, 750

[64] Fr. Copleston (op. cit., p. 137) writes: "Kant does indeed affirm God on faith, but simply as a postulate, that is, as a possibility. Further, Kant affirms God as an instrument, as it were, for synthesizing virtue and happiness."

> "At the end of the Negative Philosophy, I have only a possible religion, not a real religion. I have only 'religion within the limits of pure reason'. Those who perceive a rational religion at the end of rational science, deceive themselves. Reason does not lead to religion, just as Kant's theoretical result shows that there can be no rational religion. That we know nothing of God, is the inevitable conclusion of every authentic rationalism, every rationalism which understands itself.[65]

> "Religious need and desire.... cannot be postulates of practical reason, for it is not the general in man which aspires to happiness, but the individual. When a man (obeying his moral conscience or his practical reason) governs his relations with other individuals in accordance with what they are in the world of Ideas, he will find that only the general, the reason, in him is satisfied."[66]

To enter into Positive Philosophy is thus to enter the distinctive sphere of religion and the religions. And that means, says Schelling, that we can expect to witness "the birth of Philosophical Religion which was the object of this whole exposition."[67] For Positive Philosophy, unlike Negative Philosophy, is truly religious and can assimilate the religious consciousness and its demands. Hence we can arrive at that Philosophical Religion which is both Philosophy and Religion.

> "Without Philosophical Religion it is impossible to comprehend the real religions - Mythological and Revealed - or to interpret and give an account of them. By interpreting these two religions in the light of Philosophical Religion, one can best perceive that what we call Philosophical Religion has nothing in common with rational religion."[68]

The question of the demonstration of the existence of God takes on a whole new meaning in this context and in the light of the whole argument of the Rational Philosophy. God

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[65] W. V, 750 [66] W. V, 751 [67] W. V, 750 [68] Ibid.

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is not one existent among many. And the transformation of Negative to Positive Philosophy by the addition of a rational or natural Theology is clearly an impossibility for Schelling's view. But what Schelling feels he can and must do is give an "empirical" proof of the rationality of the will's act in positing a real personal God. In fact, Schelling's proof of God, it seems, may be stated thus: First, beginning with the idea of God as the pure That, the Prius, we must ask how it is *possible* that the world derives from him. How can $-A+A\pm A$ be a consequence of A^0? "How is it possible that, when A^0 is Prius, the Existent which is capable of the highest rational necessity, is co-posited?" Then we must show that He reveals Himself as Lord of actual empirical existence. If God is the immanent cause not only of the Existent in the Idea but of extra-ideal existence, then He must "reveal his activity independently of the Idea and even after the negation of the latter, and reveal Himself as true Lord of Being."[69] But thirdly, if He is truly Lord of all Being, it follows that the full demonstration of God's existence will be the whole history of the human race! - past, present and future - and in *this* sense, Positive Philosophy can be called "historical".

> "This demonstration (of the existence of the personal God) is not something which simply moves to a certain point - the world which is the object of our experience - and stops there. On the contrary, just as I am not satisfied, in the case of individuals who are important to me, to know that they exist, but demand continuing proof of their existence, so here: we demand that the divinity draw ever closer to the consciousness of mankind; we require that it be an object of

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[69] *W*. V. See pp. 752f

> consciousness not merely in its effects but in itself. But this too is to be attained only by stages, especially since it is demanded that the divinity penetrate not only into the consciousness of individuals but into the consciousness of mankind.
>
> "So we can see that the demonstration [the definitive proof] we call for can be furnished only by reality in its totality and by the whole human race in the totality of its duration. The proof of God, in other words, will never be complete, but will stretch back into the past and on into the future of our race...."[70]

This is the task bequeathed to Positive Philosophy (in its widest sense): the proof of God's existence, where this existence is to be found in the whole history of man but supremely in the history of man's religion - his demand for God and God's active response. Mythology and Revelation - the historical development of man's religious consciousness - reveal God's active self-revelation and gracious redemptive work. To exhibit this divine activity is the fundamental purpose of Schelling's monumental study of Mythology and Revelation.

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[70] W. V, 753.

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PART III

PHILOSOPHY AND REVELATION

A Summary-Translation of Book
Three of the Philosophy of Revelation
Second Part

Münchner Jubiläumsdruck of Schellings Werke,
edited by Manfred Schröter (1959),
Vol. VI, pp. 391-726

INTRODUCTION TO PART III

In order to come to grips with Positive Philosophy in the narrowest sense - in the sense of Philosophy of Christianity or Philosophy of Revelation - we will now present in Summary-Translation the fourteen lectures which make up Part II of the Philosophy of Revelation.[1]

The crowning idea in these lectures is that in Revelation we are dealing with - and may be grasped by - the gracious and astonishing act of God, an act that goes quite "beyond reason" in the same way that magnanimity and self-sacrifice are "beyond reason." But acts such as these are not therefore unintelligible! Though reason alone can give us no certainty that God is Redeemer, or even that he is Creator, still, once Creation and Redemption are facts - and they are facts for Schelling - reason is able to make these divine activities intelligible. This "faith become intelligible" is free Philosophical Religion, and is made possible ("mediated") by Christianity.

Now it is precisely this "making intelligible" of the divine decision and deed which is the task of the Philosophy of Revelation. And the latter will accomplish its purpose, according to Schelling, only in terms of a "higher history," the inner history of the triune God, which breaks through into ordinary or external history with illuminating and saving power.

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[1] W, VI, pp. 395-726. Once again, summarizing and the elimination of repetition have reduced the bulk of the original by about 80 percent.

Chapter One investigates the nature and content of Revelation, and the presuppositions and purpose of a Philosophy of Revelation. Revelation differs from Mythology as a freely willed process differs from a necessary one. Its content cannot be known _a priori_ but only _a posteriori_. Revelation "reveals" the divine Will or purpose, and can do so only in terms of an actual deed (the appearance of Jesus as the Christ). Hence Revelation is concerned not with nature but with grace, since God acts in a way that is "beyond reason" when he deals graciously with man in man's self-willed estrangement. Faith, objectively considered, is that goal, that state of certainty, at which all knowledge aims (although, in another sense, it is the very pre-condition of knowledge). Faith, subjectively, is the courage to believe, and may be experienced as unmerited grace.

The content of Christianity is Christ - and Christ is the content and end of Revelation. But for Schelling, and for the New Testament, the "history" of Christ is not limited to the years of his manhood in Palestine. These were but a "transition" or "moment" in his "higher history". This latter goes back to the beginning and on to the end of time. It is the history of a special divine potency-personality, independent of God, and yet ultimately an expression of and moment in the divine life itself. The fundamental motif of Christianity is that this pre-existent divine Son, who possessed his own sovereignty independently of the Father (though ultimately derived from him), refused to exercise his Lordship and chose, instead, the form of a servant and the death of the cross. As a result, the Father again made him Lord of Being, and at the end of time the Son will deliver all things to the Father. Then the divine life will be restored, consummated, and God will be "all in all".

Chapter Two presents Schelling's account of the pre-incarnate activity of the Christ (or Logos), including his activity in Judaism and in the other non-Christian (or, rather, pre-Christian) religions (referred to by Schelling as "Paganism"). Chapter Three explains how the Christ, through his incarnation, voluntary self-sacrifice, death and resurrection, changed the divine Unwill or Wrath into gracious good-will once again, and made it possible for men to become free children of God.

The Wrath or Unwill of God is the "enemy" Christ had to overcome. The Bible calls this "enemy" Satan or the Devil, and Chapter Four is Schelling's unusual and provocative discussion of Satanology and Angelology. With respect to the human situation, Satan is the Primal anti-divine power, the Urpotency of Evil, the basic structure of self-will and destructiveness ever present in human existence. "Evil spirits" are his "children" and represent the innumerable possibilities of evil - as good angels represent the possibilities of good - under which all human actions stand. But ultimately, and theologically, Satan and Christ - the Devil and the Logos, Wrath and Love, Darkness and Light - are both principles in the divine economy, moments in the "higher history" of God's life.

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To find the remedy for alienation in reconciliation, to experience a triumph over self-will through union with the Father, to become "free children of God', is the goal of human development, individually and collectively. In Chapter Five, Schelling puts forth his vision of that future community, that free association of all men, united in a kind of religionless religion or "post-Christian Christianity".

> "Christianity will then no longer be the old, narrow, stunted, puny Christianity of the prevailing dogmatic schools, and still less a Christianity thinly confined to miserable formulas which shun the light, nor will it be whittled down to an exclusively personal kind of Christianity. Instead, it will be a truly public religion - not as a State church or as a High Church, but as the religion of all mankind in which mankind will, at the same time, find the supreme knowledge."[2]

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[2] W., VI, 720

CHAPTER ONE

PRESUPPOSITIONS, PURPOSE AND CONTENT[1]

A. The Nature of Revelation

a. From "Science" and Mythology to Revelation

To move from Rational Science to Revelation is to move "from the Kingdom of Nature (as Leibniz said), i.e., the realm of necessity, to the Kingdom of Grace." And to move from Mythological Religion to Revealed Religion is to make a transition from necessity to freedom, from nature to history, from Law to Grace. Even though the same principles underlie both forms of religion, the differences between them are "profound."

> "The representations of Mythology are the products of a necessary process, a movement of the natural consciousness, left merely to itself, on which... no free cause outside of consciousness can have any further influence. Revelation, however, is expressly conceived as something which presupposes an Actus outside of consciousness, and a relation which the most free cause, God, grants or has granted to the human consciousness not out of necessity but in complete freedom.
>
> "Mythology and Revelation are to one another as exoteric process is to inner history. In the process there is pure necessity; in the history there is freedom. Of course, Mythology has produced in itself something esoteric (in the Mysteries), but even this is only a product of the external process. When Science passes from Mythology to Revelation it moves into a completely different sphere. In the former case it dealt with a necessary process; in the latter case it deals with something which exists only as a result of an absolutely free willing."[2]

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[1] This chapter comprises lectures 24, 25 and 26, i.e., W., VI, pp. 395-465.

[2] pp. 395f, 409.

b. Revelation is a posteriori Knowledge[3]

It follows that Revelation is a separate and special source of knowledge whose content cannot be derived from purely rational truths. It may be natural to think otherwise, for, after all, we are considering a "philosophy" of Revelation. As Schelling puts it:

> "If Philosophy is usually understood as a Science which Reason produces purely and simply out of itself, it would be natural to understand Philosophy of Revelation as an attempt to present the ideas of Revealed religion as necessary ideas, as pure truths of Reason, or to derive them from such."[4]

But those who consider "the essential and abiding content of Revelation to be pure rational truths" (or to be derivable therefrom), "completely eliminate the distinction between the content of Revelation and what they call reason," and make the whole idea of "Revelation" meaningless and superfluous. Why use the word "revelation" at all if, in the end, "it makes us aware of nothing more than what we knew or could know without it?" Some, of course, try to give the word significance by making it refer to "a special work of Providence" (viz., Christianity) which, they say, brought mankind "more quickly (früher) into possession of certain purer or better ideas."[5] But this is a self-defeating proposal, and Schelling allows "a certain H....g" to say so:

> "A Revelation which has no other content than what man can know on the basis of pure reason, ceases therewith to be Revelation. If one wishes to say that the value of Revelation consists only in a certain anticipation of rational knowledge, since Providence makes use of it as a means of communicating certain truths to men earlier than evolving reason would have succeeded in becoming acquainted

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[3] pp. 396-399

[4] p. 396

[5] pp. 396

> with them, absolutely nothing is gained thereby. For since this explanation comes associated with the affirmation that the first Revelation was clothed in unessential wrappings which could be stripped off only after centuries, it follows that the alleged advantage of Revelation is given up; for it is clear that according to this view it would be considered not as a method of accelerating the development of reason in man, but instead as the chief cause of its retardation."[6]

The honest investigator must concede that for "the true believers in revealed religion," Revelation is neither meaningless nor superfluous. What Revelation discloses has not been and cannot be discovered by Science or reason. "Revealed knowledge" is, therefore, empirical, _a posteriori_ knowledge. "The Science attained by means of Revelation belongs to the general category of knowledge which comes to us through experience."[7] Clearly, "reason is not the only source of knowledge, and not all things are known in the same way." Rational Philosophy may, of course, speculate that there is a God, and that there is in Him the possibility - even the likelihood - that He will decide to create other beings, "but we could never claim to _know_ this other than through the fact _that_ He has actually created." _A priori_ speculation about the divine motives which make God's creative and redemptive acts intelligible, can never give us certainty. Only the _fact_ of the world and the _fact_ of Revelation can do this.[8]

c. Revelation discloses the Divine Will[9]

In the highest sense, what Revelation "reveals" is

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[6] p.398 [7] p. 396, 398 [8] pp 399,404 [9] pp. 399-402

"the divine Will"; and what the divine Will "wills" is the "restoration" of fallen man and, through that, the final restoration of the whole creation. The New Testament declares the end-purpose of Revelation to be "a new or second creation", and knowledge of this new creation-process can never be _a priori_ but only _post facto_, since it is a process that results from "the purest and most free will."[10]

To keep this point about Revelation in context, Schelling recalls that, for him, "Creation" means the free divine decision to place in tension the potencies within the divine being, thus giving rise to "a theogonic process which is at the same time a cosmogonic one," characterized by strict inner necessity and running through various moments (of which we have an anticipatory, _a priori_ knowledge), until man - the "extra-divine" being appears. In man, this theogonic-cosmogonic process (which has already given rise to Nature) repeats itself and gives rise to Mythology (as was shown in detail in Part I above). This movement is now "a completely subjective one taking place _purely_ in consciousness and again moves forward in itself through certain necessary moments." But precisely because Mythology is a _necessary_ theogonic process which takes possession of human consciousness, it is not self-explanatory. Hence, the Philosophy of Mythology "can comprehend the _content_ of Mythology but cannot _explain_ its existence." A higher explanatory context is needed, and this is exactly what the Philosophy of Revelation provides.[11]

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[10] pp. 399f   [11] p. 400

Now, while God willed the birth of nature and the creation of man, and freely placed the fate of His creation in the hands of a creature, He did not will the "Fall" of Man. Man's "withdrawal" and estrangement from his Creator was self-willed. Nevertheless, God foresaw that this "catastrophe" would occur. Why then did he let it happen? Schelling's answer is that "before the foundation of the world" God had determined a remedy equal to the situation.

> "He knows how to counter the most extreme thing that can happen with another most extreme thing. Hence the world will not be lost, but since it was not preserved by a mere creaturely will, it will be preserved on a higher level by a deed which cancels out all doubt, by the deed of a supra-creaturely and yet at the same time human will - by a second man."[12]

And how is all this known? How is it known that man's salvation and restoration is the divine will? This, replies Schelling, is the knowledge uniquely disclosed by Revelation. Mythology, it is true, is also the result of the divine Will, but it is so only "accidentally" and does not reveal to us the divine intention that "human consciousness is not to be lost." Only through God's revelatory act in Christ do we finally know that His intention is to redeem and restore.

> "This divine Will goes beyond Mythology and hence becomes manifest only in that which, in the order of time, comes after Paganism. We can, of course, argue from Mythology to the divine Will (and perhaps it can be shown that the most thoughtful and wide-awake Pagans suspected something quite different behind Mythology - some kind of secret which was for them inscrutable), but Mythology is not the primary and proper effect of this Will....

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[12] pp. 406f

> "This divine Will, which we cannot but think of as posited and comprehended with the first downfall (Umsturz) - this divine Will as actual - is in the most eminent sense something which is absolutely not known without Revelation. It is the secret κατ' ἐξοχήν. And Revelation in the highest sense (and we speak of it only in this sense) is the revelation of this will "[13]

d. Will and Deed

Any "Will" is a mystery until it is executed. Actual performance is what "reveals" one's intentions with certainty. Hence, "the highest revelation consists precisely in the execution of that Will or divine decision formed at the same time as the catastrophe of man."[14] We may still speak of "the mystery of revealed religion", but it is false to use this word "mystery" as if revealed truths or facts, once revealed, are yet somehow still "secret".

> "So long as a will is only a will and has not passed over into deed, it is a mystery. The deed is its manifestation by which it ceases to be a mystery and can be both recognized and comprehended....
>
> "The Apostle Paul speaks of a plan of God kept secret from the foundation of the world, but now revealed by Christ. And everywhere he speaks, in expressions of deepest joy, of the fact that what was hidden from all earlier times, and even from the Fathers - the mystery of God in Christ, i.e., what was a secret between the Father and Christ - has now been made manifest to all the world through the appearance of Christ."[15]

B. Revelation and Faith, Reason and Unreason

a. Faith as Objective[16]

If the philosopher's characteristic attitude is that of wonder or astonishment, then such an attitude will be excited not by what can be understood as rationally necessary

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[13] pp. 401, 402 [14] pp. 402f [15] p. 403 [16] pp. 404-408

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but by what lies beyond all necessary reason (Einsicht) and knowledge. And this "beyond", this which is absolutely worthy of astonishment, is, for Schelling, the truth of Revelation. The aim of all Science, the final goal of all Reason, is that repose of absolute certainty which Schelling can call Faith. For all movement, including the movement of Science, is a search after rest.

> "The idea of a never-ceasing advance is really the idea of a progress without a goal (Ziel). But what is without a goal is also without meaning. Hence such an unending progress is at the same time the dreariest and most empty thought.... Vain is everything that exists, or that happens, without purpose (Ziel); and every thought which does not find such an end (Ende) is simply a destroyer of the spirit."[17]

All movement or "becoming" is but "a transition point" in which what "becomes" both is and is not. "The final goal of knowledge", however, must be the attainment of a state of finality and certainty in which all further striving ceases. "All possibility must become actuality in order that everything might become clear, open and decisive, no secret enemy remaining." This final goal which lies "beyond all thought", and "of which I can only say that it is," this state in which thought rests and uncertainty ceases and the work of knowledge is done - this one may call the state of Faith. But if so, then "one must not regard Faith as ungrounded knowledge", for it would be the most grounded of all!

> "The final thing in which all knowledge rests, cannot be without ground, since this would contradict the claim that it is the final thing. If it is the last, it is the most fundamental thing of all. It cannot

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[17] p. 405

> again become the ground of an advance, else it would not be the end....
>
> One cannot begin Science with Faith, as so many teach and preach. For the certainty which eliminates all doubt (and only this is to be called Faith) is only the *end* of Science. First the Law and then the Gospel. Reason = the Law, Faith = the Gospel. But just as the Apostle says that the Law was the disciplinarian which brought us to Christ, so must the powerful discipline of Science precede Faith if we are to be justified, i.e., really made perfect through Faith, i.e., through the possession of the certainty that eliminates *all* doubt....
>
> "Of course, in the sense in which every beginning is really faith in the *end* which is not yet seen (for if I did not believe, I would not even begin), one can say that the beginning of Science is Faith. But *this* Faith strives after knowledge and proves itself precisely in actual knowledge, so that the most faithful are the most knowledgable and, *vice versa*, those who have the greatest confidence in *knowledge* are the most faithful."[18]

Faith then is of at least *two kinds*. "There is a faith as *beginning* (which is, however, only faith in knowledge), and there is a faith as *end*, but this is only knowledge come to rest." There are, of course, "a great many things that are doubtful"; but the "final thing, in itself, i.e., taken *objectively*, is in no way doubtful."[19]

b. Faith as Subjective

Faith, however, is also something *subjective*. "It is the trust, confidence, heart (*Herz*), *courage* (*Muth*), to grasp what one doubts simply because it is too transcendent for our accustomed notions."[20]

> "If anyone penetrated through to the final knowledge, the question would then be whether he is capable of comprehending and accepting it, whether he has the

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[18] pp. 407f   [19] p. 408   [20] *Ibid*.

courage for it....

> "Revelation calls out to men: only believe, only believe; i.e., dare to regard this as true. In this sense, Science itself, as soon as it ascends to the higher domain, requires Faith, i.e., the courage and the capacity to be able to regard as true the extraordinary when it presents itself.
>
> "To some souls (so we must suppose) this Faith is given directly - they themselves see it only as Fate (Glück), as undeserved grace, which came upon them. Others are brought to (Faith) through their life-experiences, since they find no other rest for their souls. But here this Faith is to be brought into connection with Science, i.e., with our other knowledge of natural, divine and human things...."[21]

c. Revelation reveals what is Beyond all Reason

Since the content of Revelation is not discoverable by Reason, it must lie beyond or outside Reason. Whence it follows that Reality is not completely rational! "Being" is a mixture of Reason and Unreason.

> "If we say that Reason is all Being (and therefore, inversely, if all Being is Reason), it is very difficult to come up with the Unreason which is needed for an explanation of the real world. For anyone can see that alongside a great and powerful Reason which seems to govern things in a certain way, a great and powerful portion of Unreason is mixed in with all Being. Reason, however, can never be anything but Reason. It cannot turn itself into something else, and (certainly not) into its opposite. The first characteristic of Reason is to be the Unchanging."[22]

To say of man, as of God, that he acts rationally is a nice compliment. But for God, as for man, the practice of a magnanimity which goes beyond reason, is even nobler and, strange to say, is not necessarily incomprehensible. That "mystery" of Christianity which is "the subject and sole cause of Revelation" - namely, God's will with respect to man in his estrangement - is "beyond Reason". But this does not mean that the revelation of the divine decision is incomprehensible, for that decision "stands in a perfect relationship to the extraordinary character of the event to which it refers, as well as to the greatness of God."[23]

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[21] p. 409 [22] p. 415

> "Others, while not going so far as to say that the being of God is only the being of Reason, want at least a rational God who cannot act beyond Reason. But therewith they concede to God less than they concede to man, for even man is credited with being able to operate beyond Reason. To call a man rational is a fine compliment, but anyone can see that it does not say very much. It will be agreed that while every man does not possess heroism or faith, he does possess Reason. For man not only not to hate, and not to pursue his enemy, but to do him good and even to love him - this is beyond Reason. The highest precepts of a magnanimous ethic - one which elevates man - would be unfulfilled if man could not act beyond Reason. Why then should not God be able to act beyond Reason?"[24]

God cannot be caught in the nets of our logic. He is at once supra-rational and rational. Indeed, there is a profound irony in all divine behavior. How foolish of God to have involved himself with a world! And yet, the foolishness of God is his wisdom; the divine weakness (for man) is stronger than man! "In Creation he shows the power of his Spirit, in Salvation he shows the greatness of his heart."[25]

> "One can use Unreason as an objection against what claims to be ....rational, but not against what claims to be beyond all reason, and to have a content which could never enter any man's thoughts unless revealed to him, i.e., disclosed through reality. Even less could it be used against what puts itself forth as foolishness, i.e., foolishness from a certain standpoint of human judgment. Nothing is more wretched than the work of rationalists of every kind who want to make rational what presents itself as beyond all reason. The most daring of the Apostles - and one may recognize here a profound dialectic - speaks simply of

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[23] p. 416 [24] p. 415 [25] p. 418

> the divine foolishness, of the weakness of God which, he says, is stronger and more powerful than human wisdom and human strength (I Cor. 1:25). Only the strong can or may be weak.
>
> "With J. G. Hamann, one could answer the good-natured folk who simply must have a rational God in their sense, by asking if they have never yet noticed that God is an extraordinary creative genius (Genie) who cares little for what they call rational or non-rational. They are unable to grasp the profound irony of all divine behavior, and he who has not understood it from the beginning, in the creation of the world.... shall certainly not comprehend it later in the doctrine of redemption.[26]
>
> "....It is also against the law of contradiction that God, in the Creation, posits what he immediately proceeds to deny....But the deity (i.e., the absolute freedom) of God consists precisely in the power of this contradiction - this absurdity, if you will, to be at the same moment the one who affirms and the one who denies, and yet not therewith to be divided but to remain who he is."[27]

d. To be Drunk and Sober at the Same Time

> "In man, too, there is this same contradiction: a blind productive power, limitless in its nature, standing - in the self-same subject - over against a sober power which limits and forms it and therefore literally negates it. Every spirit's work shows to the judicious observer whether it proceeds from a harmonious balance of that activity or whether one of the two preponderates. A preponderance of productive activity is present when the form seems too weak as compared with the content, so that the content partly overpowers the form. The opposite is the case wherever the form forces back the content so that the work lacks fullness.
>
> "The secret of true poetry is to be drunk and sober at the same time, not at different moments but at one and the same moment. This is what distinguishes the Apollonian enthusiasm from the merely Dionysiac. To present an infinite content - that is, a content which literally struggles against form and seems to destroy every form - to present such an infinite content in the most perfect, i.e., the most finite form: this is the highest task of art.[28]

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[26] p. 416 [27] p. 417 [28] Ibid.

In this distinctive comment on the nature of Art, Schelling sees the same "contradiction" in man - insofar as a spark of creative power has been granted him - as he sees in God. God knows perfectly how to be "drunk and sober at the same time." "He shows himself as the highest, artistic nature," for "he seeks the finite, and does not rest (so to speak) until he has brought everything into the most intelligible, most understandable, most finite form. The limitedness of Christianity, of which many speak, is precisely purpose, intention."[29]

e. Revelation is God's Gracious, Personal Act

Schelling's final word here is to stress again the crucial point that Revelation - or the deed which is its content - is simply the gracious, personal, and therefore astonishing, act of God.

> "One can see a divine foolishness in the fact that God got himself mixed up with a world, for in his eternal self-sufficiency he could have merely delighted in the pure contemplation of the world that was possible through him. But the weakness of God can be recognized especially in his weakness for man. And yet, in this weakness he is stronger than man. His heart is big enough for anything. In the Creation he shows, in particular, the power of his Spirit; in Salvation, the power of his heart. This is what I meant when I said that Revelation - or the deed which is the content of Revelation - is his personal act. For just as we say we do not know a man in his true self when we know only his spirit (for the latter is the more powerful the more it is to a certain extent impersonal and independent of him, i.e., independent of his will), just as we believe we know the man himself only when we are acquainted with the expressions of his heart, so the fact is that God became truly personal for man only in Revelation. Here he stands as a man over against man, and what Moses said - namely, that God has spoken to him not in vision or dream but face to face - is what Revelation really is. The relation characteristic of Revelation is an immediate and personal one.

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[29] p. 417f

> "But God stands infinitely higher above man than any individual man (no matter how great his spiritual stature) stands above another. It is only in this sense, then, that the dealings of God in Revelation are beyond all human comprehension - not that we cannot conceive them at all, but that in order to conceive them we must have recourse to a standard which surpasses all ordinary human standards. Therefore, as I have already remarked, the astonishing thing loses none of this capacity to astonish simply because it is now understood. Furthermore, only such an absolutely-astonishing (deed) can bring to rest the interminable unrest of the human spirit. Only the recognition that something has happened than which nothing greater can happen, _quo_ _majus_ _nil_ _fieri_ _potest_, can bring us to a standstill. There must be a _finis_ _quaerendi_ _et_ _inveniendi_, a goal at which the never-resting spirit rests, else all knowing would be vain, purposeless. Here there must come a time in the development of things when human knowledge, which possesses an infinite drive toward movement and advance, has to confess it can advance no further, i.e., when it is struck dumb."[30]

C. The Task of the Philosophy of Revelation

a. The "true object" of this Study

In the light of the presuppositions already discussed, Schelling is now explicit (in various ways) about the purpose of a Philosophy of Revelation. Its task, he says, is (i) to demonstrate the _uniqueness_ of Revelation, by showing that it "lies beyond all necessary knowledge" and is "not a necessary product but the manifestation of the completely free and most personal will of God." Then, (ii) it must make _intelligible_ that divine decision (_Entschluss_) which is "the proper subject and to that extent the single cause of all Revelation." This is not an attempt to "ground it _a_ _priori_", for "if this decision were not already there, already _manifest_, no reason

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[30] pp. 418f

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would dare, no reason could dare, to regard such a thing as possible. But it is possible to make it intelligible after it is there, and to do so in general and in detail." Hence, the task at hand is (iii) to explain that "higher history" of divine purpose and action which is the content and ultimate context of Revelation. We must "expand the smallness and narrowness of our thoughts to the greatness of the divine thought."[31]

> "The content of Revelation is nothing but a higher history which goes back to the beginning of things and on to the end. The Philosophy of Revelation will simply explain this higher history and trace it back to the principles which are known and given to it from elsewhere."[32]

To accomplish this purpose, however, we must be able to assume "a real relation of human nature to God, not a merely ideal relation mediated through reason." Such a real relation is assumed "throughout the entire content of Revelation itself." Revelation is more than instruction. It brings a new relation of man to God. Now we know from the Philosophy of Mythology that man has a real relation to God before all Revelation. Hence the Philosophy of Mythology becomes the foundation for the Philosophy of Revelation.[33]

> "The Philosophy of Mythology has demonstrated that there is a real relation of the human creature to God before all Revelation. It has established this on so broad a basis that I may accept it as solidly established. Hence the chief ground of a Philosophy of Revelation is already established, and a revelation is no longer unintelligible at all... The original relation of man to God is a mediated one. The Father created the world not directly but through the Son. The same mediation occurred in Revelation, but on a higher level and in a more definite and personal sense."[34]

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[31] See pp. 403f, 419f, 422.

[32] p. 422

[33] pp. 420-422

[34] p. 421

It is the fact of Revelation that concerns us. Hence the Philosophy of Revelation "will not establish any actual doctrine or any speculative Dogmatic." It will be completely indifferent to ecclesiastical interests and the dogmatic debates of theologians - for the fact of Revelation is older than any dogma.

> "Since we are not proceeding dogmatically, we can intend no antithesis toward any dogma commonly maintained or accepted. Revelation itself is older than any dogma. And it is with Revelation that we will be dealing, not with the various ways of interpreting Revelation as these have made their presence felt in different periods.
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> "Furthermore, I must expressly point out that we are not dealing with a proof, but only with an explanation of Christianity which we presuppose as fact, - of course as the highest and most decisive fact of all history... Still, it is only as fact that it comes here into consideration. We are not at all discussing here Christianity as doctrine."[35]

b. Critique of earlier Interpretations of Revelation[36]

Earlier methods of dealing with Revelation - namely, the approaches characteristic of Scholasticism, of the Reformation, and of Mysticism - have been unsatisfactory, says Schelling. The dogmatic theologians of Scholasticism, in seeking "the means to express and make intelligible the content of Revelation," looked "not in Revelation itself but in the philosophy that existed outside Revelatinn." The result was a doctrine of Revelation which was almost wholly unhistorical. Later, with the re-awakened historical spirit of the Reformation, there was a return to history, theology's natural soil, and a rejection of scholastic-dogmatic definitions. The historical sources of Revelation were now looked upon as alone authoritative. But Reformation theology, unfortunately, ran off to another extreme, and indulged a "purely external historical approach" which failed to understand the "deep inner historical method which is, at the same time, the truly scientific." This external-historical approach established "the trustworthiness of Christ and the Apostles" and the authenticity of the writings ascribed to them, and then proceeded "to show philologically-grammatically that this or that New Testament book contained this or that doctrine." "It was enough to be able to say: Here it stands" (in the Scriptures). The systematic understanding of the text was left up to each individual. A third approach, the mystical, had the merit of proclaiming the need for a true inner understanding of Revelation. But, in its piety, Mysticism acted "as if it wanted to produce the content of Revelation purely out of its inner illumination." Hence, it became arbitrary, and unclear, and offered what amounted to allegorical interpretations of Revelation. In the end, "Mysticism understands the historical as little as Rationalism does."[37]

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[35] pp. 422, 426

[36] pp. 423-426

c. The New Testament must interpret itself

These earlier approaches to Revelation all fail because they do not "understand the historical as historical." A true interpretation is not reductive or seductive. It does not distort, or impose its own philosophical or dogmatic preconceptions. Instead, it recognizes that "Christianity is

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[37] pp. 423-425

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first of all a fact which must be ascertained like any other purely historical fact". Then it allows the New Testament to speak for itself, and insists on understanding it in its own terms. Like every significant phenomenon, Christianity contains in itself the key to its own comprehension.[38]

Now, this means eliciting from the New Testament itself that "larger context", that "higher history", in which Christianity appears as the highest and final moment. For Schelling is convinced that there is a "system" hidden in the authentic sources of Christianity, one which is "everywhere presupposed but nowhere completely expressed." The discovery and exposition of that system will require "scholarly inquiry", "rigorous and precise criticism", and plain, unsophisticated speech. One must make even the "supernatural" appear "natural".[39]

> "For the true system will be one which embodies all the particular suggestions and utterances of the scriptures without excluding one of them, and explains through this union. One must try to stay as closely as possible to the simplicity of these (biblical) statements and not, as most mystics have done, put into Christianity a pretentious wordiness which is completely strange to it.... It was noted long ago by true specialists like Pascal, that Christ and the Apostles speak of the most sublime things only in the simplest and most natural expressions."
>
> "With Christianity one should not ask: How am I to interpret it so as to bring it into agreement with a particular philosophy? One should ask: Of what kind must that philosophy be which can comprehend and take up Christianity into itself?.... I want now to consider Christianity in just the same way that I considered Mythology, namely, as a phenomenon which I want to make intelligible as much as possible out of its own premisses. Hence, strictly speaking, I want to let it explain itself."[40]

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[38] pp. 425, 626 [39] p. 425 [40] pp. 425f

d. The Earthly History and the "Higher" History of Christ

The Philosophy of Revelation is concerned with the history of Christ in two senses of the word. First, Christ was an ordinary-historical figure - which is true of none of the other gods of the world's religions - and this demands a historical, not a mythical, explanation of Christianity.

> "As far as mythological representations are concerned, there is nothing historical about them other than the fact that they have been believed and regarded as true at a certain time among certain peoples. But we find no reason to ascribe an historical truth to the persons who are subjects of these representations. Even if we bear in mind that the actual theogonic potencies, and not mere representations, are active in the mythological process, and on this ground accept actual theophanies among the Pagans, still the gods do not thereby become historical persons. But Christ is no mere appearance. He lived like any other man, was born and died, and his historical existence is attested as strongly as that of any other historical person. The phenomenon of Christianity falls so clearly in the period of attested history, that to my knowledge it has not occurred to anyone in Germany to deny that such a Christ existed."[41]

Secondly, however, Schelling is equally insistent that the "higher history" of Christ be not reduced to merely ordinary history. Those who grant the historic existence of Christ, but proceed to hold that Jesus received "mythical glorification" at the hands of his disciples, are guilty of a completely subjective historical explanation. Such a view has enjoyed "much favor in recent years", observes Schelling, but he points out that he "and many others" had thought about such an hypothesis "more than forty years ago".[41] He rejects it because he finds it simply unbelievable. "How did this country Rabbi come to be the subject of such a glorification?" Through his teaching? But its ethical content was paralleled among the better Jewish teachers, and its chief content - the proclamation of his divine mission and Sonship - was not believed "by the vast majority of his people." He was rejected, not glorified.[43]

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[41] pp. 621f [42] pp. 623f. As D.H. notes (p 624n), Schelling, while still a university student, had written an essay which dealt mythically with the History of the Childhood of Jesus (die Kindheitsgeschichte Jesu) - an essay "which is still among his handwritten manuscripts.")

The truth, for Schelling, is just the reverse of the above hypothesis. The higher history of Christ precedes his earthly history and makes it intelligible, explaining many of the gospel stories which, "dogmatically, one could call myths " Ordinary historical-critical discussion of the Scriptures is irrelevant here:

> "For Christ's sovereignty is completely independent of these stories - which are in many respects, of course, quite arbitrary! It is not grounded in them, but precedes them. They are not necessary in order to recognize the sovereignty of Christ, but to the contrary, the sovereignty of Christ - as we have defined it - is necessary to comprehend the stories, the gospels."[44]

e. Philosophy, History and Mythology

Appropriately, Schelling now offers "a few remarks about the nature of Philosophy". He sees Philosophy as no longer pre-occupied with "the pure subject." Whereas Fichte once could posit the non-Ego as non-existent, and Kant could "honorably pension off the thing-in-itself" (Jacobi's phrase), Philosophy now is once again taking seriously the real world of Nature and History. Indeed, a philosophy which does not take historical reality seriously will end up fabricating its own history, and denying the actual continuity of culture. Philosophy must deal with Reality as it is; and this means it must deal with Christianity as real history. Some are at a loss to know how to handle Christianity, for they cannot assimilate it to their notions of what history should be, and therefore ignore, distort or dismiss it. But "we can neither undo Christianity nor undo what has happened as a result of it." It produced the most profound change the world has ever seen. Hence we must recognize it as a fact, as real as the forms of the natural world, and make it the object of philosophical understanding.[45]

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[43] pp. 624f, 427 [44] p. 625

But as soon as Philosophy turns to History, it must recognize that History begins in Mythology, that "first and most ancient thing.... without which one could find neither a beginning of history nor a transition to Christianity." Mythology is "the key to the past", and also the key to the present, for the present is built on the past: Mythology is "a necessary moment in the determination of the present spiritual state of man."[46]

f. Christianity presupposes Mythology

The present state of human consciousness is "thoroughly conditioned by Christianity", and Christianity, whatever its mysterious source may be, is "a historical phenomenon" whose effects are entirely visible. The first "historical effect" of Christianity was its triumph over Paganism, a fact that

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[45] pp. 409f, 414f   [46] p. 411

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implies, first, that Paganism must have been open and receptive to the influence of Christianity, and, second, that the power and reality of Paganism is a measure of the power and reality of its conqueror. Hence, for both theologian and student of history, a true understanding of Christianity must rest on a true understanding of Paganism. In other words, a Philosophy of Revelation must presuppose a Philosophy of Mythology.

> "The proud power of Paganism bowed before the despised Cross. Its temples were overturned, its oracles struck dumb. How will this greatest of all revolutions be understood if one does not find the cause in the nature of Paganism (Mythology) by virtue of which it was capable of receiving that influence of Christianity and hence made possible such inner dissolution and destruction?
>
> "The first, most obvious and most immediate effect of Christianity... was precisely the freeing of mankind from that power of darkness which, in Paganism stretched its rule over the world. It follows from this, however, that in the last analysis the reality of Christianity... cannot be recognized unless in a certain way the reality of Paganism is recognized first. For as I said earlier, the reality of a liberation is judged or defined in terms of the reality of that from which freedom is won; and therefore, a true understanding of Christianity... is not possible without a prior Philosophy of Mythology."[47]

It is still important, in Schelling's view, for Christians and Christian missionaries to truly understand Paganism. His comments here reflect the situation in his day. First of all, Paganism still persists; in fact, it is predominant.

> "According to the most recent reckonings, the total number of monotheists, i.e., Jews, Christians and Mohammedans, is 344 millions; the number of polytheists is 656 millions. Even if there is a mistake here - inasmuch as the latest contention (e.g., by Balbis) is that the common assumption that there are

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[47] p. 412

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> 1,000 million people in the world is too great - still the result remains, viz., that the number of polytheists far exceeds the number of monotheists."[48]

Present-day Paganism, however, is judged by Schelling to be "faded, withered, dead in its roots". It "brings forth nothing new." This poses a special problem for Christian missionaries, for their success depends on their ability to enter into non-Christian religious perspectives and discover points of contact with Christianity.

> "The pagan peoples are, so to speak, dead members of history, no longer participating in it in a living, active way.... One must once again put life into Paganism in order not to have to confront it as a dead and therefore unconquerable mass - or at least one must know how to find and uncover those points in it in terms of which it is still connected with the real and true religion.
>
> "There is no doubt that one of the noteworthy moral phenomena of our time is the great general support of missions, i.e., the attempt to lead the peoples who are still held fast in Paganism over to Christian ideas and convictions. But quite a different result could be expected from this meritorious and praiseworthy undertaking if it were supported by deeper insights into the sources of Mythology, and hence of Paganism, than is the case - according to previous experience - with the majority of missionaries. Most of them, as some admit, cannot put themselves in the soul of a pagan, or enter into the thought-world of a Hindu Brahmin. And since they are able to see in pagan ideas only illusions and lies, they can find no entry into the imagination of these men. Pagans, for their part, must always find the purely literal and formal content of ecclesiastical orthodoxy to be absolutely strange. We cannot blame intelligent and wise Hindus if they refuse to feign a faith in formulae which, from their point of view, agree with nothing in their own Faith or world-view, nothing in their philosophy or wisdom."[49]

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[48] p. 413 [49] pp. 413f. Cf. p. 621

D. An Outline of the Content of Revelation

Schelling repeatedly describes and summarizes the content of Revelation, and a limited amount of this repetition is included here. But first, we must state his theses in their simplest terms.

a. Revelation = Christianity = Christ

In essence, Revelation is Christianity and Christianity is Christ! More specifically, Schelling will propose the following theses: (i) Revelation is Christianity (the opposite of Mythology or Paganism, (ii) the Old Testament is Christianity in prophecy and anticipation, (iii) the essential content of Christianity is the Person of Christ, hence (iv) the supreme task confronting the Philosophy of Revelation is the understanding of the Person of Christ.

> "We understand by Revelation, which we consider to be the opposite of Mythology or Paganism, nothing but Christianity; for the Old Testament Revelation is only Christianity in prophecy and anticipation, insofar as the Old Testament is comprehended only in and through Christianity. The real (eigentliche) content of Christianity, however, is purely and simply the Person of Christ. At the same time, Christ is the bond between the Old and New Testaments, for the sole final content of the Old Testament is the Messiah. Hence one can say: in a Philosophy of Revelation the issue is essentially that of comprehending the Person of Christ. Christ is not the Teacher, as the saying goes, He is not the Founder (of Christianity), He is the content of Christianity."[1]

Everywhere the New Testament regards Christ as of more than "purely human or ordinary-historical significance." In fact, it ascribes to him a pre-human, even a pre-worldly, existence. And the only way to take this view seriously is to recognize the reality of a supra-historical history in terms of which such a personality as the New Testament Christ can be comprehended. Hence the problem of understanding Christ becomes the problem of understanding his status and "higher history" before his historical appearance as Christ.[2]

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[1] p. 427

b. The fundamental motif of Christianity

The historical appearance of the second divine Personality as Christ marks the birth of Christianity. And the fundamental motif of Christianity is that of the pre-existent divine Son, who possessed his own sovereignty independently of the Father (though ultimately it was derived from him), but refused to exercise his lordship and chose, instead, the form of a servant and the death of the cross.

It is Schelling's claim that the pre-existent "history" of Christ (the second or mediating potency) becomes intelligible when it is presented in terms of those distinctions elaborated in the Pure Rational Philosophy (Part II, above). The same "higher history" can be demonstrated from the Scriptures, especially the Pauline and Johannine literature. But here we present two statements of this supra-historical history in metaphysical terms.

c. The Higher History of the Second Divine Potency

(a) "That divine personality which we have defined as the second, was in the creation mere potency, as that which is begotten is only potency so long as it has not yet realized itself. Being was originally possessed only by the Father who alone, therefore, is original God. - The divinity of the Son is everywhere recognized as something derived from the Father. In this sense, Christian theology calls the Father fontem et principium divinitatis. At the end of the creation, however, the Son is what the Father is; for he possesses being. He possesses it, to be sure, not as the Father does, originally, but as something given to him, i.e., as the Son. Yet this being is not a being independent of the Father, not a being which is proper to the Son or which he would possess outside the Father and for himself.

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[2] p. 427. Cf. pp. 621f

"But through man's guilt that principle (in whose conquest the Son had realized himself) which was overcome in the creation, is again aroused, and with it is posited a new tension which is distinguished from the earlier tension (in the Creation) by the fact that it is not a divine principle, but is posited purely by man and against the divine Will. Man has usurped the exclusively divine right to call forth that potency which forms the basis of all things and which brings all things about - to call forth again the beginning of creation itself out of inwardness and hiddenness - to make external again the mystery of creation, so to speak.

"But by usurping the generative (fatherly) potency's (function) in this way, he [man!] appointed himself - the Father[3], i.e., the one who posits the Son. But this means that the Son is in a being independent vis-a-vis the Father, a being which he previously did not have. He is posited outside dependence on the Father - not inwardly, but outwardly. It cannot be meant that he inwardly, in himself, lost the consciousness of his divinity, or ceased to know himself as divine Personality or as Personality (period!) But that he still recognizes his inward dependence on the Father, and wills nothing but the will of the Father, makes no difference to the fact of his external independence.

"In this being which is independent of the Father, he is at first nothing but potency, and must act as such. The potency must do what it is compelled to do by the inner necessity of its nature. For the relation between B and A^2 is, as you know, this: if B is conceived to be in a state of mere potency, then A^2 is actus purus; but if B rises or is raised ad actum, then A^2 becomes potency, unmediated potency, i.e., potency which can have only one will, viz., to restore itself in the *actus purus*, by overcoming what is opposed to it.

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[3] This expression is explained on p. 367 and p.371 of the Sixth Supplementary Volume of Schelling's Works.

"The Son, therefore, becomes again the one who *must* work, as in the creation. A *new* process is posited, a process in the human consciousness, for everything now proceeds in the latter and depends on it alone, for only in (the human consciousness) is the B raised again. At the end of this process - the Mythological process - the mediating potency had restored itself *ex potentia in actum* and therewith became *Lord* of being (first of human consciousness, but thereby of being in general). And because it had once again come into possession of being - into sovereignty - it also re-established itself in its *divinity*, though not in *true* divinity - for it can possess true divinity only in community with the Father from whom it is still separated. But it is at least ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ - to use an expression of an Apostle, not true God, but in the *form* of God, for in form it *is* Lord, and it can be God *actu*. *This* is the moment in which we ... must think the mediating potency before it appears *as* Christ.

"It is absolutely *necessary* for the understanding of Christianity - the *conditio sine qua non* of perceiving its true meaning - that we comprehend this *cutting-off* of the Son from the Father, (the cutting-off) of this being which is in his own form and hence in complete *freedom* and independence of the Father. Not only are numerous passages and expressions in the New Testament (with which we shall soon deal) unintelligible without this positing of the Son prior to Christianity (the appearance of the second potency as Christ) - a positing of the Son outside the Father and independent of him - but the whole economy of the New Testament, the whole meaning of the Christian event, is similarly unintelligible without it."[4]

(b) "We know from world times a demiurgic personality, a potency which mediates the creation, and which becomes actual at the end of creation as Lord of being, hence as the divine personality. (Then) man returns it again to latency, robbing it of its sovereignty. Of course, this does not mean that it ceases therewith to be a divine personality *in itself*. Inwardly it is not changed. Its will, its consciousness, is the same. But vis-a-vis the newly aroused principle (the principle which should not be), it is again in the state of negation and suffering. Confronted by this being to which it once again has to subject itself, it is no longer a

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[4] pp.429-431

> Lord but, first of all, just a potency which acts in a merely *natural* way. For the principle which should not be has arisen only in order to be once again subjected to it [the second divine potency] - through a process from which it cannot extricate itself because it is in the power of man [i.e., man aroused B, the contra-divine principle which should-not-be, in the Fall]. It cannot be denied that apart from this (second potency) human consciousness would have had to surrender completely, and been brought to nought, destroyed. But this is against the hidden but still divine will of (the second potency), just as it is against the will of the Father who does not want the world to be lost.
>
> "But now comes the moment [at the end of the Mythological process] when (the second potency) makes itself, in human consciousness, again Lord of that being, the moment when it once more has a sovereignty and therefore becomes *to that extent* once more (externally) a divine personality. But it is a divine personality as Lord over the being which the Father has *not* given it, the being which it possesses independently of the Father. In this way it is itself *independent* of the Father and hence, in this moment, it is to be defined, as far as its being is concerned, as *an extra-divine divine personality* - as 'divine', since it is Lord of being; as 'extra-divine', since it possesses this being as something *not* given it by God. Since it possesses it independently of the Father, it can do with it what it will, and could possess it *permanently* as something independent of the Father. *Therein* lies its freedom. *That* is what one must know if one is to understand that *obedience* of Christ of which so much is said and on which, at the same time, so much store is set. The Son *could* exist in *his own* sovereignty independently of the Father. To be sure, he could not be the *true* God outside the Father, but he could be *God*, i.e., Lord of being, outside of and without the Father. In other words, he could be God not essentially, but actually (not *dem Wesen nach*, but *actu*). The Son, however, rejected *this* sovereignty which he could have had independently of the Father, and *therein* is he Christ. *That* is the fundamental theme of Christianity."[5]

d. The Reality of the Fall and of the Contra-divine Principle

The principle (B) which formed the ground of Creation, comes to self-consciousness in man, is set free by man, begins

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[5] pp. 428f. Schelling now finds support for his view in St Paul - "for God forbid that I should deduce as Christian doctrine what is not Christian doctrine at all" (p.443) - but we have placed this section in Chapter Two (below).

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to exist in its own power, and so becomes the principle of a new possible movement. (All of this was intended by God). But in man, who "wants to be like God, the unity of the potencies is merely secondary, creaturely and therefore dissoluble. If he is = B, it is not given to him to be the other potencies as well." When the principle (B) is set free, it is not for man the beginning of life (i.e., a continuing free movement); it is death. The principle (B) is aroused by man (it does not posit itself), hence it is "that which should not be" and is against the divine Will. Can God, then, be in it? He must be in it, Says Schelling, "for it does not cease to be a divine power (Kraft), and if God is not in it everywhere it would be nothing at all." But if God is not in it with his Will, he must be in it with his Unwill.[6]

> "He is in it in the sense theology has in mind when it teaches that the power (Kraft) with which even the sinner operates and by which evil is perpetrated is still a divine power (Cf. Ps. 18:26f)... Man has perverted the position of the potencies, and so God operates perversely in the perverse, i.e., he no longer acts as fatherly Will, but as Unwill... (Even in the godless, God is, but outside his divinity... Something can be materially in God and yet outside God as such)."[7]
>
> "The principle which really should not be, is, in terms of its substance, the divine Unwill, but for that very reason it is now that which should be. For example, in capital punishment as such we have that which ought not to be, for the divine command says: thou shalt not kill. But since in capital punishment there is expressed the Unwill of the law which is regarded as something holy, so this which ought-not-to-be is, in this way, right, and is 'that which should be'."[8]

Just as the very law which forbids killing sanctions killing, so the principle which ought not to be has a right to be, for the divine Unwill is in it and sanctions it. And God "is much too just violently to destroy anything which exists legitimately." This perversion, however, will destroy man if a new mediation is not found. How, then, can this being which opposes God be reconciled to God?

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[6] pp. 443f [7] p. 444 [8] p. 445

> "For it is the curse of the all-highest which fell upon the human consciousness. The Unprinciple is now, precisely on account of this divine Unwill, that which _should_ be (as explained above). It is the principle of his wrath which God _must_ deal with. Since he can have no relation of the will to it, he must _affirm_ it as his Unwill... otherwise it would be posited entirely outside his power - which is unthinkable. Yet this Unwill of God is... a will of indignation, strange to him, hence, strictly speaking, independent of him... Therefore, of himself or directly, he can no more negate this will than posit it."[9]

e. Reconciliation in Christ through Man's Religions

The exclusive function of the mediating potency - in which the Creator placed his _true_ or _proper_ Will - is to bring back what is posited outside God, and to reduce to non-being that Unprinciple which contains the divine Unwill and which is therefore just "a divine dissimulation." To accomplish this, the mediating potency must dissociate itself, at least externally, from God (becoming thus an extra-divine potency) and go after the estranged being to effect a reconciliation.

In all man's religions apart from Christianity, this mediating potency (= Christ before he appeared _as_ Christ) has been at work, but it has accomplished only "a purely apparent and external" reconciliation, a neutralization merely of the _effect_ of the opposed principle (the Unprinciple of consciousness).

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[9] pp. 447f

> "The process, in which the mediating potency operates as an extra-divine, purely natural potency, is itself an undivine process which is not a true reconciliation because it negates the contra-divine principle only in its effect (Wirkung) not in its root or potency. Hence its right remains, for if I have a right I may abstain from exercising it without therefore losing it. Here is the most important point of our whole study...
>
> "We have explained the whole of Mythology on the basis of this successive overcoming. On the other hand, the existence of Mythology is a factual proof of the process of that conquest."[10]

To overcome the Unprinciple in its potency or ultimate ground, to negate its right to be, to placate and reconcile the divine Unwill, to win "true, inner mediation and authentic peace with God", the mediating potency must negate itself, the Son must sacrifice himself. This required a will "far surpassing the merely natural will" by which the contra-divine being was overcome. It took "an absolutely supernatural and therefore truly divine will - not only to restore that being to its essence but also to sacrifice itself as extra-divine God."

> "Only when it negates itself in its independence from God can (the mediating potency) cancel out that Unprinciple inwardly and in its right, so that not merely its operation but even its power is broken...
>
> "Just as the first, i.e., the external and natural conquest of the contrary principle is the event and content of Paganism, so in the other conquest (in which the potency which was victorious in Paganism, finally sacrifices itself as extra-divine) is the content of Revelation and Christianity."[11]

f. Sovereignty of the Son and Final Restoration of Divine Unity

Because the will of the second potency (i.e., the Son, or Christ) is to restore the estranged world (and himself) to the Father, the Father has made him Lord of this fallen world.

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[10] p. 446 Cf. p.471 [11] pp. 450f

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> "This will, by virtue of which the Son pursues the being which turned away from God, but only in order to bring it back and return it to God along with himself - this will, by virtue of which the Son, even in his separation from the Father, is nevertheless one with the Father - this will to negate not merely the opposing being but also with it to negate himself as an extra-divine being - this will is the reason that from the time of the Fall, i.e., from the time the world became extra-divine (in the sense of the Latin extra), the Father was moved to hand over this being completely to the Son."[12]

During the present world-age, the Son has exclusive Lordship over the extra-divine being, but at the end of this age he delivers it back to the Father "as a divine being acceptable and reconciled to him." As I Cor. 15:24-28 puts it:

> "Then comes the end when the Son shall deliver the Kingdom to God the Father, after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet...'For God has put all things in subjection under his feet'. But when it says, 'All things are put in subjection under him', it is plain that he is excepted that put all things under him. When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things under him, that God may be all in all."

Although this passage speaks of the Son's subjection to the Father, the prior condition of this subordination is that everything be subject to the Son! Hence, "the Son shall be subordinated to the Father only by virtue of the fact that, and insofar as, he himself is God, i.e., Lord over all." The passage teaches only the end of the Son's exclusive sovereignty over the world during this present age, and "not the end of the Lordship of the Son in general." The Son's reconciling activity must be "perpetual, and in this sense, eternal", for the Father possesses the world only through the action of the Son,

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[12] p. 453. Repeated at pp. 466, 471f (Cf. Acts 2:36).

"only as something overcome by the Son continually in its Un-divinity." Hence, Paul is pointing to "joint sovereignty as the final necessary outcome."[13]

> "The Son *cannot* continue to be outside the Father after the being, in connection with which *alone* he is outside the Father, has ceased through him himself to be an extra-divine being... The *moment* in which the Son subjected all being to *himself* is precisely the moment in which all being returns to the Father. But the Son himself must, *in* that moment and *with* that being, return to the Father."[14]

To make this outcome as intelligible as possible, Schelling offers several recapitulations, which we summarize here. (a) In the beginning, and up until the Fall, the being of Father and Son were one. We can say that the Son here is *subordinate* to the Father, inasmuch as "subordination" means "having no will of his own," "no movement independent of the Father," "no freedom vis-a-vis the Father." (b) The Fall, however, "brought it about that the Son had his *own* will" and became "not an independent God, but a personality independent of the Father," (although it operated, before Christianity, only as a natural potency). The Son did not *will* this independent status, is unsullied by it, and remains *inwardly* one with the Father, conscious of his original state and wanting only to restore it again. *Outwardly*, however, he is oriented toward the estranged world - hence "an extra-divine, inwardly-divine personality", a true Mediator. (c) Now, "after overcoming the anti-divine being," the Son "surrenders this independent personality and returns again into subordination to the Father, becoming again, for that very reason, what the Father is, namely, God." But this final subordination is something different from the initial subordination, for "now the Son returns as an independent personality into the Father - something he could not be in the beginning."[15]

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[13] summarizing the discussion, pp. 453-456

[14] p. 456

So when "the brilliant Apostle", St. Paul, in "one of the most profound words in the New Testament", declares that in the end God will be all in all (πάντα ἐν πᾶσι), he is not giving us Pauline "pantheism", but "the most enhanced, most sublime, monotheism, which we may look upon as the outcome of our whole previous development."[16] For what Paul says of the Son can also be said of the third potency, the Spirit, and brings us face to face with the Tri-unity (*Dreieinheit*) of God, that is, with the Christian idea of the Trinity. "There are now not merely three persons in general, God is not merely in three personalities, but there are three persons *each* of whom is God." Before the Fall, "Ἓν τὸ πᾶν", i.e., One (the Father) is all. After the Reconciliation, "πᾶν τὸ Ἓν", i.e., each is the One, i.e., each person is God.[17]

g. The Doctrine of the Trinity[18]

Characteristically, Schelling understands the Trinity not in a purely logical or dogmatic way, but "historically".

> "The Trinity-idea passes through three moments: It must pass from *Tautousia*, where properly speaking only the Father is the ruling ousia - where all is enclosed in the Father - through *Heterousia*, which persists during

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[15] pp. 457, 451f [16] p. 458 [17] pp. 457f [18] pp. 458-465

> the tension and until the final reconciliation, to *Homousia*, the last moment, incomprehensible without the two preceding moments..."
>
> "With these three moments are presented, at the same time, the so-called *heresies* as *necessary* moments of the true idea. Tautousia (in which the Father is all and all is in the Father) corresponds to *Sabellianism*. **Heterousia** corresponds, to some extent, to Arianism, which is based only on those passages in the New Testament where the Son is incontestably recognized as a divine personality outside the Father. Arianism goes too far only in that it makes the Son the creature. Without this excess, Arianism represents a necessary moment of the true view... Arianism takes the Son's being-outside-of-God, which is a matter of only one specific moment, as the absolute, universal doctrine. Thereby it becomes heresy. For heresy means that a particular meaning poses as universal, i.e., a meaning which represents only a specific, particular moment presumes to put itself forward as the whole. The moment of Heterousia is absolutely necessary if the threeness is not to become, in the last moment, purely nominal. This transition into a purely nominal threeness can be prevented only if the three have been once really outside one another and actually independent of one another.
>
> "Christian doctrine has experienced its greatest difficulty in trying to find an expression for the real distinction between Father and Son, one which prevents the transition into a purely nominal unity, without slipping over into....polytheism. The root of this difficulty lies in the fact that the traditional discussion does not recognize an extra-divine being of the Son (and of the Spirit). It is precisely this *substantial* difference which brings it about that subsequently in the unity (which is no longer merely the *first* unity restored), the three can not only be distinguished from one another, but can be conceived as actually independent personalities."[19]

The notorious difficulty of satisfactorily stating the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, has always been due to the fact that "a middle course must be steered between the two rocks of 'too much' and 'too little' (as Athanasius called them.)"

> "At the end of the Eleventh Century, when Roscelin called the three persons *tres res sive realitates*, Anselm

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[19] pp458-459

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> objected. But when Anselm called the three personalities tres relationes in una substantia, he himself fell under suspicion."[20]

If forced to choose, Schelling would prefer so-called Tri-theism, for "merely nominal three-ness without any actual plurality explains nothing," whereas so-called Tri-theism could make a great deal intelligible and "remains far closer to the sense and the whole institution of Christianity."[21] Those accused of the heresy of Tritheism - "men like the brilliant Aristotelian, Joannes Philoponus (at the end of the 6th Century)", "the famous Abbot Joachim of Flores" and Bishop Gilbert de la Porree - were getting at something fundamentally important. They were laying "the chief emphasis on plurality" in the Godhead.

> "Strictly speaking, they posit first of all, i.e., without prior unity, hence to the exclusion of our first moment (Tautousia), the plurality; Father, Son and Spirit. Each is posited as an essence existing for itself and independent of the others, but not as an independently existing God. They actually affirmed only the first proposition. Never did one of their opponents ascribe to them the second [which would have meant literal tri-theism]. So we must concede that they denied this, and argued in the following fashion: Neither is the Father himself God without the Son and the Spirit, nor is the Son as such God without the Father and the Spirit; therefore, since each is God only in community with the others, they are, although several beings (Wesen), nevertheless only one God. This they expressed briefly by saying: they are not one according to the substance, but one only according to the divinity. But this, as such, is an unobjectionable expression....
>
> The chief mistake of the 'Tritheists' lay not in what they affirmed but in what they excluded, namely, that prior unity which, as prior, can be called nothing but a substantial unity - although, subsequently, after the substantial difference has emerged, it rises to the supra-substantial by virtue of and in relation to the substantial difference..."[21]

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[20] p. 459 [21] pp. 461f

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For Schelling, no expression of the Trinitarian dogma has ever or can ever achieve precision and significance unless the separateness of the moments is clearly recognized.

> "Heterousia is necessarily comprehended in Homousia (the third moment). Without it, the latter would be mere Tautousia. The strongest followers of Athanasius admit this, and even Athanasius himself....remarked: the same cannot be homousisch to the same but only to another; it is to the same not homousisch but tautousisch. This is accomplished by our exposition. When the tension is completely overcome and the Son has returned into or under the Father, thus becoming what the Father is (and also the Spirit), each of the three persons are homousisch to the others but not tautousisch (since what is substantial in each is the same and only the exponent, so to speak, of this element in each is another.")[22]

From this standpoint, "the three persons can be conceived as successive rulers, as the three rulers of successive times."

> "The time before Creation is in a special sense the time of the Father, since being is still exclusively in his hand. The present time is in a particular sense the time of the Son... The third time, which during the whole creation is future and to which everything is supposed to arrive, is the time of the Spirit.
>
> "Thus it is permissible to think of the three persons as the successive rulers of the three ...great world-ages -
> (1) the time of the exclusive power of the Father,
> (2) the time of the present Creation in which being is handed over to the exclusive power....of the Son,
> (3) the time in which time will be no more, i.e., the time which is eternity. One can call these three times 'eternal' in contradistinction to what is usually called 'time' but is only one member of this great sequence of times, i.e., purely temporal time (= A) which is but a member of true, absolute time....The 17th Century Angelo Silesius has this among his epigrams:
>
> Der Vater war zuvor, der Sohn ist noch zur Zeit,
> Der Geist wird endlich sein am Tag der Herrlichkeit
>
> This epigram is to be understood....as a number of thoughtful men of the Middle Ages understood it when

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[22] pp. 462f

they concluded from the fact that the Old Testament was the time of the Father, and the time of the New Testament the time of the Son - hence particular times, repeating in narrower circles the higher and more general times - that a third economy, a third time, was at hand: the time of the Spirit which was to bring the eternal gospel....as Abbot Joachim of Flores held. Perhaps this use which Joachim made of the Trinity doctrine, when he represented the three persons, so to speak, as the exponents or potencies of three successive times, presented the opportunity to accuse him of Tri-theism..."

"For us, that succession has the further and general meaning that everything, i.e., the whole creation, i.e., the whole great development of things, proceeds from the Father - through the Son - into the Spirit.... Not that the sovereignty of the Father and Son then ceases, but simply that the sovereignty of the Spirit is added to that of the Father and the Son. But therewith this sovereignty is perfectly revealed and actualized. For what John says of the individual man: the divine indwelling is perfected in man when the Spirit is added, is valid also of the whole. The 'Day of Glory' is the day of the common glorification of Father, Son and Spirit."[22]

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[23] pp. 463ff

CHAPTER TWO

CHRIST BEFORE THE INCARNATION[1]

A. Christ's Pre-existence in Non-Christian Religions

a. Christ's Reconciling Activity in Mythological Religion

Christ, before his appearance *as* Christ, was active in the Mythological religions. Indeed, Schelling sees "Paganism" (the non-Christian religions) as the vast background for Christianity, and refers to the pre-Christian Christ as "the pagan Light", "the true potency of Paganism", "the eternal Mediator and Reconciler", "present in all states of human consciousness without himself being sullied by them."[2] To be sure,

> "the mediating personality operates in Paganism only as a natural potency, but since the *true* Son, the authentic Christ, is also in this potency, *it* follows that Christ was already in Mythology, though not *as* Christ."[3]

> "Hence the Pagans were χωρὶς χριστοῦ (Eph. 2:12), separated from Christ, i.e., from Christ as such, and yet the same natural potency that was to die in Christ was the one by which they were illumined and which alone took care of them. For the Father, who made himself inaccessible to the extra-divine being, withdrew *externally* into the consciousness of a small, inconspicuous people .... Christ, on the other hand, was the Pagan Light - although in his purely natural activity. He was the proper (*eigentliche*) potency of Paganism."[4]

> "When Christ entered the tension, he became a natural cosmic potency - as such he operates in Paganism against the blind principle which is hostile to God and man. In his death, he died as this cosmic potency. The divine aspect of the Reconciler broke through the natural aspect and consumed it, so to speak, in the death. Therewith was ..completely removed the *whole tension* posited in human consciousness, and the *whole* divine unity restored."[5]

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[1] This Chapter comprises Lectures 27, 28 and 29, i.e., pp. 466-543, and pp. 431-442 of Lecture 25.

[2] pp. 466ff [3] p. 466, Cf. p.470 [4] pp.466f [5] pp. 473f

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> "He has experienced all suffering and temptations to which the human consciousness was subjected in Paganism (Cf. Hebrews 4:15). At that time, he was already the suffering Messiah - as the Old Testament represents him - suffering precisely because he was not exercising his will."[6]

> "By his appearance in manhood, by his life and his death as man, Christ has simply completed the mediation, but he is the eternal Mediator, the Mediator between God and man from the beginning of the world-time - hence also already the mediator in Paganism. It is not in this activity by which Paganism arose that he is Christ; rather is he already Christ when he exercises this activity, since this activity (this power over Fallen being) is given to him only insofar as he is already Christ, i.e., the anointed of God, the one appointed by God as Lord and Heir..."[7]

> "The Pagans knew nothing of Christ, and yet he was close to them by virtue of his activity (Cf. Acts 17:27). Without him human consciousness would have been given up to an inevitable destruction."[8]

> (In his death) "only the natural potency died; the divine himself negated his extra-divine being."[9]

In Paganism, then, Christ "prepared the soil which one day should receive the seed of Christianity, a purpose for which Judaism was much too limited. Paganism and Judaism were two separate economies which were to flow together only in Christianity." Indeed, "during the whole time of Paganism, Christ was in a continuous advent, although he actually came only when the time was fulfilled."[10] As Psalm 94 says, it is the Lord who instructs and chastises the heathen nations.

b. Christianity is the Fulfilment and Final Truth of Paganism

Christianity, then, is not "a mere negation of Paganism", but its fulfilment and truth. If Christianity had

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[6] p. 468 [7] *Ibid*. [8] p. 469 [9] p. 471 [10] p. 467

"nothing positive in common with Paganism," then "history breaks into two halves," mutually exclusive, and with no point of contact between them. All historical continuity and coherence is broken, and "Christianity appears not as the eternal thing that it is," but as "something which exists only from a certain time on." This view belittles Christianity!

> "The content of all true religion is an eternal content... A religion which is not from (the foundation of) the world and through all times, cannot be the true religion. Hence Christianity must have been in Paganism, and the latter must have had the same substantial content. (This agrees with our earlier statement that Christ was in Paganism - but not as Christ, which means merely substantially, not in his truth)... It is inconceivable that mankind could have survived through millenia without any reference to those principles in which alone salvation lies."[11]

> "Paganism - precisely because Christianity is not its absolute negation but its truth - also possesses in itself a relative truth. When we view the whole great pagan movement as the background for Christianity, then Christianity has a far greater and more powerful basis for its reality than the usual sophistical proofs of its truth are capable of giving it. Christianity did not one-sidedly emerge out of Judaism; it also has Paganism as its premiss. Only thus is its formation the great world-historical phenomenon for which it has been taken from time immemorial."[12]

The objectionable features of Paganism (e.g., human sacrifice) are not an argument against this view - they are present also in the Old Testament, e.g., Abraham's attempt to sacrifice his son - for they are due to the anti-divine principle, not to the mediating potency (Christ). Thus:

> "...in Paganism, it is not the reconciling potency which entices to human sacrifice, but the principle inimical to human life, the principle which man had aroused again and which, once set free, naturally had a grievance against man as the one to whom it was supposed to be subject. It was rather the higher potency which, in the more genial time, first prevented Teknothysie, indeed, human sacrifice in general."[13]

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[11] p. 469 [12] p. 470 [13] p. 468

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Other examples of the way in which Paganism - and also Judaism - are fulfilled by Christianity are discussed. For example, in Paganism the Holy Spirit was always only future. Because, in Mythology, the second potency "negated the tension only externally (actu) and not inwardly, the third potency does not become present." The Spirit is in Paganism but never possessed as such, and "Paganism ends with a prophecy which, indeed, can be called a prophecy of Christianity, for only through Christ as such shall the third person become present."[14]

Furthermore, in both Judaism and Paganism the idea of reconciliation, of expiatory sacrifice, was an essential one. But these religions offered "only precursive signs of the great sacrifice offered once for eternal reconciliation" by Christ. In them, sacrifices must be offered perpetually since they negate only the external effect of the hostile principle. The sacrifice of Christ, however, was offered once for all, since the principle was negated in its very ground.[15]

c. A Recapitulation

Of Schelling's continuing recapitulations of the fundamental meaning, motif and cause of all Revelation, we shall present the following, which includes a statement of the different senses in which Christ is present in Paganism, the Old Testament, and Christianity.

> "The true Son, the personality which is hidden in the purely natural potency, the one who from the beginning - in agreement with the Father - had the will to bring

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[14] p. 478 [15] p. 471 Cf. 446-450

back the being which was fallen away from God - this (true Son) is precisely the cause of all Revelation, just as the same (Son) is, as merely natural potency, the cause of all Mythology..."

"The intention to bring back through the Son the world which he, the Father, could not receive in himself, was already formed before the foundation of the world, for only with an eye to this mediation could he originally will a world. Hence there was....the time of mere intention, and the time of actual deed, whence it follows that before the time of actual deed, he who was to become man was already the principle of Revelation, but one which was still veiled, speaking only through signs and prophecies as in the Old Testament.

"The distinction between Revelation and Natural Religion (as I call it) is not the substantial (aspect) but only the active (agent). What is active in the one is the purely natural potency, in the other the personality itself. But since the personality is not to be separated from the natural potency, it follows that Christ is implicitly already in Paganism, although not as Christ. In the Old Testament, Christ is already present as Christ, but still understood merely as coming (im Kommen begriffen). In the New Testament, Christ is revealed as Christ. Previously he was there....but in Paganism hidden by a double veil, in Judaism by a single veil.

"As the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem had a double fore-court, the outermost being that of the Pagans, and then a holy one, but then also a holy of holies into which only the high priests might enter... - so Paganism, Old Testament and New Testament are arranged over against one another."[16]

B. Christ's Pre-existence according to the New Testament

Schelling now presents Scriptural evidence for his view of Christ as an extra-divine divine Personality prior to his Incarnation, his pre-existence extra patrem. This New Testament support is of the highest importance to Schelling: "God forbid that I should deduce as Christian doctrine that which is not Christian doctrine at all!" He believes he is simply making explicit the "system" hidden in the New Testament. We shall try to present the discussion so as to impart the flavor of Schelling's exegesis. What follows are "condensations" in which there is no editorializing, and the direct quotes are indicated, of course, by the appropriate marks. We must add that the Pauline passage will be found to describe the pre-existent status of Christ, while in the Johannine Prolog Schelling finds a "history of God".

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[16] p. 480

a. Exposition of the Pauline Kenotic Christology[17]

> "The really classical passage is Philippians 2:6-8. This magnificent passage, which opens up the deepest mystery, goes thus: 'Let this mind be in each of you which was also in Christ Jesus who, being in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be snatched at, but divested himself and took the form of a servant, and became like as another man, and was found in fashion as a man, humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on the cross.'"
>
> The usual explanation recognizes only two states: (i) the Son's pure divinity - his oneness with the Father - before the Incarnation, and (ii) his earthly state of "humiliation". But if Christ, before his Incarnation, is still "in unity with the Father and therefore himself truly God, how can it be said of him: 'he did not think to snatch at equality with God?' For one does not need to snatch to oneself what one already possesses." Hence there must be a third state, an in-between state, in which the pre-existent Christ is not pure deity and not yet man but an extra-divine personality -sovereign over the Fallen world (hence divine, for sovereignty is the outward mark of divinity), but independent of the Father (hence extra-divine). The Son's status as an extra-divine divinity prior to the Incarnation is presupposed by St. Paul.
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> "In an author like Paul, the rule of hermeneutic must always be to take him with the utmost literalness."[18] Note therefore his careful and precise choice of words in this passage:

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[17] pp. 431-437 [18] p. 433

Notice first that Paul's use of *morphe* (Christ was *en morphe theou*, in the *form* of God) is not consistent with the common view that Christ was consubstantial with the Father until the moment of the Incarnation. *Morphe*, and its derivatives, are never used to indicate "essence". Quite the opposite. See, for example, 2 Tim. 3:5 which speaks of "men who have the *form* (*morphois*) of godliness, i.e., the external form, but who lack the essence."[19] The Philippians passage goes on to say, 'he took the *form* of a servant', where the *morphe* obviously indicates something contingent.

"How can the same word be used in a completely different sense in one and the same passage? How can *morphe theou* signify essential deity (*Gottheit*), and the immediately following *morphe doulou* signify merely assumed transitory servanthood? This is inconceivable to anyone with sound ideas about exposition."

"The real explanation is: he was *en morphe theou*, i.e., he was not truly and essentially God (for he could be this only in unity with the Father), but he was God *specie*, *actu*; he had at least the external aspect of God, which consists in sovereignty, the sovereignty over being."[20]

As for the word ὑπάρχων (*en morphe theou huparchon*), it too is always used by Paul (and by Luke) to indicate actual and therefore contingent being, never essential being.

"For example, it is used of accidental, bodily defects, even of one who was lame from birth (χωλὸς ἐκ κοιλίας μητρὸς αὐτοῦ ὑπαρχων, Acts 14:8)..., of transitory states, as in Acts 7:55 where Stephen sees the heaven open, being full of the Holy Spirit (ὑπάρχων δὲ πληρης πνεύματος..), and in Gal. 1:14 where Paul says of the time when he was still persecuting Christians: ζηλωτὴς ὑπάρχων . Christ in Luke 9:48 says: 'he who is the least among you shall be the greatest' (ὁ μικρότερος ἐν πᾶσιν ὑμῖν ὑπαρχων - here the *huparchon* is used not of one's essential being but of one's character, not *dem Wesen nach* but *der Gesinnung nach* - οὗτος ἔσται μεγας - here εἶναι is used of the true, essential being. The meaning is: he who *makes* himself the smallest, shall truly be the greatest.) In his speech to the Athenians, in Acts 17:24, Paul says: God who made the world and who is Lord of heaven and earth, οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς κύριος ὑπάρχων , dwells not in temples made with

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[19] *Note*: the *New English Bible* has: "men who preserve the outward form of religion but are a standing denial of its reality."

[20] p. 433

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hands. The state of affairs in which God is Lord of heaven and earth is not an essential one (for otherwise it would be a necessary one) but an actual and in a higher sense accidental one."

"How then can we suppose that the essential deity of the Son is expressed by these words: *en morphe theou huparchon*. The expression applies perfectly, however, to that middle state (that in-between condition) of a sovereignty independent of the Father which the Son had before his appearance as Christ. *This* state was a merely transitory one, in the highest sense accidental; nevertheless, nothing prevented him from grasping it and asserting it as a permanent one."[21]

The words of Phil. 2:6f continue to confirm this interpretation. For example, if the pre-incarnate Christ already possessed essential God-likeness, why would Paul bother to describe it as something Christ "set no store by" (οὐκ ἁρπαγμὸν ἡγήσατο), something he refused to seize for himself. Furthermore, the words τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ can be translated only as "being on the same footing with God". "This neuter plural, ἴσα, has here the force of an adverb; it is as much as to say ἴσος θεῷ ." The Son was never "ἴσος θεῷ adjectivally, essentially equal to God, but could only ever be ἴσος, on the same footing, possessing an external equality with him."

"Every word of the passage speaks for our explanation. *En morphe theou* cannot mean: he was true God; *morphe theou* is something accidental, like *morphe doulou*. The verb *huparchein* expresses the same accidentality. And as far as the *isa theou einai* is concerned, this could not express the being of the one who is true God, but expresses a merely external equality (*Gleichheit*)."[22]

Now if the Son "assumed the form of a servant" and became completely like man, then obviously he is not at the same time "in divine form". Some, therefore, unwilling to concede that the human Jesus was purely human, have wanted to translate *en morphe theou huparchein* by (*cum*) *in forma Dei esse posset* (was able to be in the form of God), i.e., "he *could* still have shown his divine sovereignty but did not want to." But this is forced. "He *could* be" is really equivalent to "he was - essentially - God". And *huparchein* cannot bear this meaning since, as already shown, it is used only of accidental or contingent being. Finally, "he who has once decided to become man has certainly not made this decision in order to shine forth as God!" Such action would be

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[21] pp.433f [22] p.435

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self-contradictory, and hence an impossibility for a divine or even a rational being. "That *potuisset* is therefore entirely deceptive." The truth is that "the highest emptying (*Entausserung*) of Christ consisted in the fact that he decided to become man."[23]

Thus, Philippians 2:6ff is "really decisive", since, to understand it completely, we *must* acknowledge "that Christ, before his Incarnation was different from God, i.e., he was not himself God, although he was not man either. He was in a middle state in which he was *instar Dei* (*en morphe theou*) without being God himself." "He was *instar Dei* because he alone was still Lord of the being which was estranged from God or the Father."[24]

b. Support from other New Testament passages[25]

Many other New Testament passages support this view. (a) Hebrews 12:2 reads ἀντὶ τῆς προκειμένης αὐτῷ χαρᾶς ὑπέμεινε σταυρόν, i.e., "instead of (*anstatt!*) the joy which lay before him (which he could choose if he wished), he endured the Cross." (b) In John 17:5 Christ prays: "Glorify me with the glory (*Herrlichkeit*) which I had with thee" - not, as one might expect, "before I became man", but "which I had before the world (*kosmos*) was made." That is, "Christ recognizes that *since* the world began (for as soon as there is the world, there is the Fall), he ceased to possess that sovereignty which he had *before* there was a world, i.e., when he was still *with* the Father and not separated from him." (c) In John 10:17f Jesus says: "*I have power* to lay down my life and I have *power* to take it again" - revealing a freedom and independence which is totally incompatible with the dogma of his substantial dependence on the Father. ("He has this being neither from himself nor from the Father, but from man - therefore he calls this being after the son of man"). (d) In John 8:58 Christ says, "Before Abraham was, I am." Now, "he could not say of himself as *God*, "I was", in the same sense as he says it of Abraham." His meaning must be: "Before Abraham was, I am as the one I am *now*, as this personality posited outside God, distinct and independent of Him." (e) John 17:3 distinguishes the Father, "the only true God" and Jesus as Christ, whom the Father "sent" into the world; and (f) John 13:31 clearly distinguishes and subordinates the Father and the Son: "the Father is greater than I."

"If one does not distinguish different moments in the existence (*Dasein*) of Christ, then all these passages will be taken to refer to the *eternal* being of Christ. But they do not refer to the *eternal* being of Christ. Instead, they refer to his being as Christ, which cannot be an eternal condition, because it is posited only through the Fall of man."[26]

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[23] pp. 436f [24] p. 437 [25] pp. 437-440

The most decisive passage of this kind is (f) Mk. 13:31 "Of that day and hour (when heaven and earth shall pass away) no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, *nor even the Son*, but only the Father." Now some say it is only with respect to his humanity that Christ professes this ignorance. But "the Son is here set above the angels.... According to the New Testament, however, only God is above the angels. Hence the Son is conceived as God - and yet he knows nothing of that day! Clearly, then, ...the Son is above the angels and yet is *not God*." Similarly, in Acts 1:7, "it is not for you to know time or season which the Father has fixed by *his own* authority." It is the Father's exclusive pre-rogative to determine when this present world shall cease. The expression ἡ ἰδία εξουσία "excludes any complicity, not only of the Son who has become man, but also of the Son before the Incarnation."[27]

Specific stories - such as the account of the Temptation of Christ - are also incomprehensible without recognizing a pre-existence of the Son *extra patrem*.[28] Let the Temptation story be a later Christian fabrication if you will, the point here is that Satan will "waive his claim to dominion over the world and hand it over to Christ if Christ will accept it only from *him*."

"The Tempter knows what he wants. If Christ were to take the being for himself and as a result, so to speak, of a contract with that blind, cosmic principle, then the unity of the world with God would have been for ever torn asunder. The only bond by which that principle (=B) was still connected with God was precisely the mediating potency (Christ). If the latter surrendered its connection with the Father, there would really be a world *completely* independent of God."

"Through the Fall, man made for himself three lords out of the one Lord whom he should serve. The first one he served was that blind power which man called forth but could not reduce again to latency. This power had developed so far as to offer Christ - who is the second lord, and in whom the first recognizes its previous conqueror and *foresees* with foreboding the one who is to destroy it completely - it offers him lordship over

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[26] p. 439 [27] pp. 439f [28] pp. 441f

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> all being if he, Christ, will recognize him as God, worship him, and determine in this way to tear himself loose from the true God."
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> "But Christ fights off the Tempter with one word: it is written, thou shouldst worship God thy Lord and serve him alone. Thus the Mediator shows here what task he has taken upon himself: it is to lead fallen being back from the many lords to the one lord, the Father. But the Temptation shows that Christ, even after he became man, was potentially able to seize a glory independent of the Father; hence, much more was it possible for him to continue in that glory or sovereignty, in that morphe theou, which he had acquired before the Incarnation."[29]

c. Exposition of the Johannine Logos Christology[30]

In investigating the question of the pre-existence of Christ, the Johannine Prolog is, for Schelling, a prime resource. Schelling can discern here a complete intra-divine history. He is explicit: "Understand that the words of John are for me only the text on which I develop the history of the second person in the uninterrupted, precise succession of its moments."[31] He appears to regard this passage - and his "elucidation of each verse in the light of the Christological moments contained in them" - as of the highest significance. His thirty-page discussion reveals in striking fashion Schelling's characteristic blending of speculation and exegesis. He (i) examines the meaning of the term Logos, (ii) offers a critique of certain linguistic and philosophical explanations of the Prolog, and then (iii) and (v) presents "the true exposition" with (iv) a related discussion of the nature of Time, times and eternity. We shall summarize this section in the manner adopted in (a) and (b) above.

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[29] pp. 441f   [30] pp. 481-510

(i) The meaning of ὁ λόγος in the Prolog[31]

There are many explanations of the term *Logos* in John. According to one view, "John had assumed that this expression was known through the teaching of Cerinthos." True, the Fourth Gospel does contain expressions hostile to the system of the Gnostic Cerinthos (and other later Gnostics), but it is "a risky business" to suppose that John's work is a deliberate anti-Cerinthos document.[32]

The "most recent interpretation" suggests that *Logos* in its Johannine use is to be understood in terms of its use in Philo.[33]

"Philo actually speaks a great deal of a *logos theou*. Sometimes it is for him the prototypical *world in God*, the original sketch of the world, God's representation of the world and the order and symmetry in it. Sometimes it is for him the principle *through which* everything has come to be. To this extent it appears identical with the demi-urgic potency of which John says: all things came to be through him."

But Philo's Logos "can be identified with the Platonic idea of the divine *Nous*. For him, this *Logos* was actually the divine *understanding*, which he could conceive as a mediating member between the created world and the invisible God, in order to keep the latter from direct contact with matter."

"Whether Phil ever conceived this *Logos* as a potency *operative* in the creation of the world or *merely* as pre-worldly, is still a big question; but in John, the Personality which is meant by the word *Logos* is decidedly demi-urgic, i.e., the potency active *in* creation." What is more, "Philo never speaks absolutely of the *Logos*, as John does, but always adds ὁ θεῖος λόγος or ὁ θεοῦ λόγος, where John says simply ὁ λογος."[34]

There are problems, then, with the Philonic explanation. First, it is hard to imagine how John could assume in his readers such a good, general acquaintance with Philo as would justify him using the term *Logos* in the Philonic sense. Second, the Philonic explanation makes the mistake of "always presupposing a genetive which is not there in John". John never has *ho logos tou theou* but the completely abstract *ho logos*, (verses 1 and 14).

It is easy to see why John avoided the usual names or designations, "for how should he refer to the one who

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[31] p. 481-488 [32] p. 483n [33] pp. 481-484 [34] pp. 481f

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was in the beginning? Should he use the name Jesus? But Jesus is the name of the incarnate one, and this one was not in the beginning. Could he use the term 'Christ'? But this personality is not Christ until after the Fall of the world from God. But John wants to make the person of Christ,... this Subject who already was in the beginning, to become intelligible from the very beginning. So he has every reason to designate it, in the beginning of his exposition, as *generally* as possible, and the more abstractly we explain the expression *ho logos*, the more may we hope to approach the meaning of the evangelist."[35]

The most abstract explanation would be to assume that *Logos* means simply the Subject (*Sache*) in question, *de quo sermo*: "the Subject (*das Subject*, *der Gegenstand*) of which we speak *was* in the beginning." i.e., the Subject *par excellence*. Just as the Jews use הַשֵּׁם (the name) to mean Jehovah himself, the name above all names, the name κατ' ἐξοχήν, so *ho Logos* would mean the Word above all words, i.e., the Subject *or* Person above all others (for "it is not necessary to take *ho Logos* in a personal sense"). Taken abstractly, the question is: "τίς ὁ λόγος οὗτος, What kind of Subject is this?"[36]

It is "not unusual for the New Testament to express the personal abstractly where an indeterminateness is *intended*" (as, for example, in the angel's words to Mary at the Annunciation). And here in his Prolog, John's intention is to begin *at the beginning* and give the whole history of the one who would one day appear in the flesh. So for him to use an abstract, indeterminate word for Christ in his opening statements, "is quite in accordance with his plan to show the successive revelation of the person of Christ." Hence, he does not say "the living or enlightening one, but the Life - the Light - completely *in abstracto*." The First Letter of John begins in the same abstract way: "ὃ ἦν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, *what* was from the beginning" and "*that which* we have heard, seen, touched, etc.," (always the neuter = *quod* = *was*, in German). Again, ὁ λόγος τῆς ζωῆς, in the Prolog, is "just a circumlocution for ἡ ζωή," as *Mimra da Jehovah* (the word of God) is, in the Chaldean translation, a mere circumlocution for God. Clearly "it is quite gratuitous and groundless to supply *tou theou* to the *ho Logos* in the gospel."[37]

Ho Logos, then, "means nothing more than the Subject in general."

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[35] p. 484 [36] pp. 484f [37] pp. 486f

(ii) Critical Comments on Philological and Philosophical Explanations.[38]

Linguistic and philological studies can make an essential contribution to our awareness of meaning, and yet, "the most complete knowledge of the language in which a work is written cannot in itself bring about an understanding of its content." Mere linguistic knowledge does not prevent foolish mistakes. For example, in a certain French literary work, the phrase "Anaxagoras établit en principe le Nous" was translated into German as "he established as a principle the We (Wir)." Perhaps the translator thought that "since a German philosopher has established the Ich as a principle of philosophy, a Greek philosopher could well have set up the Wir. In any case, it sounds more social and less egotistical."[39]

Certainly as far as the New Testament is concerned, mere grammatical-philological exposition is no substitute for an understanding of the character of the divine life. As an example of the shaky support afforded theological orthodoxy by linguistic analysis, consider the opening words of John's Gospel: Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεον καὶ θεὸς Ἧν ὁ λόγος
"These words have always been regarded as an incontrovertible support for the doctrine of the divinity of Christ." Opponents of this doctrine have tried changing the θεός to θεοῦ, but this is "against the agreed testimony of all manuscripts and ancient translations." If, however, they were to try placing a period after the last Ἧν, what grammatical or linguistic objection could there be? After all, there was no punctuation in the original! If we adopted this suggestion, we could view the passage in the following way: the author first says, "in the beginning", i.e., before anything was, "there was the Word." But then it occurs to him at once (so we must suppose) that before anything was there was only God! So he immediately adds: "And the Word was with God,"- which is his way of saying that he by no means posits the Word before God. In fact, to exclude such a misunderstanding, he adds explicitly, "and (truly) God was." A philologist might object on the ground that θεός occurs without the article. But, it could be replied, it always so occurs when no contradistinction (e.g., with respect to the Son) is intended. Of course, the Prolog would then go on (according to this suggested punctuation) ὁ λόγος οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεόν. But this whole phrase, as well as the οὗτος, now seems completely superfluous - and is, indeed, "omitted from several manuscripts" for that very reason.[40]

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[38] pp. 489-495 [39] p. 490 [40] pp. 491f

But such interpretations are not to be taken seriously, for "in interpreting the New Testament the following rule applies: Seek first the Kingdom of God. Look first for the whole, the complex of divine activity (Veranstaltungen) in the New Testament, then all the rest will automatically be added unto you. That is, the coherent whole (Zusammenhang), the totality of divine truth is decisive over the separate elements."[41]

The "narrow pietists of certain Protestant schools" miss this point, and equate acceptance of the divine authority of the Scriptures with "submission to particular passages." They search for proof-texts to be used in verbal battles. But this method of arriving at theological truth is indecisive and, in practice, these people fall back on the authority of 16th Century orthodoxy. But this ignores the fact that the most important truths are discovered only through an understanding of the whole of Scripture and implies, furthermore, that "neither knowledge of language nor the art of interpretation nor the human spirit itself, have made any advance since the 16th Century." The Reformers themselves, of course, were not "blindly oriented toward individual passages, but toward the spirit of Christianity."[42]

Just as we cannot hope to construct "that great historical context" in terms of which alone Christianity becomes intelligible, by bringing together a mosaic of disparate individual texts, so we cannot hope to achieve our end by employing a philosophy which excludes everything historical.

Fichte, for example, attempted a purely philosophical exposition of the Johannine Prolog, i.e., he tried to bring it into harmony with his Idealism.[43] For Fichte, all things exist only in and through Knowledge (Wissen). Later, he identified this Knowledge (or Wisdom or Reason or Logos) with the divine existence (Dasein) which is both other than and inseparable from the divine being (Sein). Thus, "in the beginning was the Word" means "all extra-divine being has its ground and place only in Knowledge." And how, we ask, does this general Knowledge or divine Dasein become the historical Christ? Actually, replies Fichte, everyone could be the Logos become man. "The peculiar feature of Christianity is simply the affirmation that the specific historical person, Jesus of Nazareth, was of himself and by his nature and without any instruction, just such a perfect, sensible representation of the eternal Knowledge, i.e., of the Logos." Since Jesus was unique in this respect, he is truly called only-begotten and first-born Son of God. Christian dogma holds that others can discern the truth - that human knowledge is nothing but the divine *Dasein* - only through Christ's mediation. But Fichte believes his philosophy has found this truth independently of Christianity.

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[41] p. 492 [42] p. 493 [43] See pp. 493-495

But now we must set aside all such expositions of the Johannine Prolog - those which rest on merely grammatical and linguistic considerations, and those which are purely philosophical - and proceed to elucidate the Prolog in the light of the Christological moments contained in it.

(iii) The "true Exposition"[44]

"*In the beginning*" - i.e., without presupposing anything.

"*the Logos was*" - *simpliciter*. Here is that absolute beginning in which the Logos is the pure being (*Seiende*) of God. Arius says there was a time when the pre-Existent Christ *was not*, implying that he was created out of nothing, hence a created being, albeit the first and highest. But this simple ἦν disallows such conjecture. The Logos "was" and "in such a way that absolutely *nothing* preceded it." It *was* without qualification; hence, *not* as a particular potency or personality, but as the *actus purissimus* of the divine being itself.

"*and the Logos was with God*". Here is the same Logos that "was in the beginning" but now it is, so to speak, different. To say it was "with God" means more than "it was in God eternally." An advance is implied. The Logos has now become "a particular potency distinct from God." Hence we have here the first *moment* of primordial being (*unvordenkliche Sein*), "when this pure being (*Sein*) is already posited *ex actu puro*, hypostatised, potentialized, and made into an Existent (*Seienden*) *with* God." The God *with* whom the Logos "is", is later called "Father".

The Logos was *with God* first in God's *idea*; that is to say, before the Creation it is an *ideally*-distinct but not yet *really*-distinct particular potency. But after that, it is *in* the Creation where it operates as a particular, demi-urgic potency, *really* distinct from God, although still *with* him (i.e., it is not yet independent of him). These two moments are embraced by the phrase: "the Logos was with God."

"*and the Logos was God*", i.e., at the *end* of Creation when it is Lord of being (*Sein*), in possession again of the divinity it had when it *was* in the beginning. It possessed that former divinity not independently but in

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[44] pp. 496f

and only in the Father. Hence John does not say here "the Logos is *ho* theos" - only the Father is God himself - but just "the Logos is theos (divinity)."

(iv) The "History" of Being and the Nature of Time[45]

Distinctions such as those above illumine the age-old puzzles about the relation of eternity to time and the whole genealogy of time. "From the very beginning, time has been the bad conscience of all empty metaphysics, the point it liked to avoid." The Positive Philosophy clarifies matters, however, by distinguishing:

First, the eternal, pure being of the Logos (or Subject). "That is eternal which no potency precedes. In eternity nothing can be posited *as* something, e.g., as A, without exclusion of a not-A." This idea of pure actuality, Being as *actus purissimus* prior to all potency and event, is eternity in the absolute sense. We call it "absolute eternity" or "supra-temporal eternity" since it does not yet have any relation to time. "It is not even a first moment, but is above all time and precedes the first moment *only in thought*." It is the absolute *terminus a quo*.

Second, the being (*Sein*) of the Logos (or Subject) *as A*, i.e., *as a particular potency*. In its pure substance the Logos is eternal, but as a particular potency in the divine idea it is said to be "from eternity". This "moment" sets out from eternity (i.e., absolute being or supra-temporal eternity is its starting point), and we call it *pre-temporal eternity*. As such it is not yet *time*, but it is (or becomes) a time inasmuch as the Creation posits it as *past*.

Third, the being of the Logos *as active, demi-urgic potency* from the moment when Creation began. For the Logos is active or operative only after the contrary being has moved from mere possibility to actuality. The being that is anti-divine appears at the Fall. And at the same time the Son is brought into being in order to overcome fallen negative being. "Hence the generation of the Son is parallel to the beginning of Creation." We reject the notion of his "eternal generation", for the *generation* of anything is inconceivable in "absolute eternity." It is impossible to think of him, furthermore, as being *produced* in that *first* "moment", i.e., "from eternity" - unless we have logical relations in mind and conceive the Son as a purely logical emanation from the Father. Hence we must speak of "the eternal being of the Son", not the eternal generation of the Son. The former alone is scriptural. Hence, John does not say

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[45] pp. 498-503

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say, "in the beginning the Logos was generated", but simply that it "was". "He holds to the eternal being of the Son - and, of course, the *simple* being, not the as-Son-being, for all being-as-something presupposes already an exclusion, a distinction, hence an Act."[46]

Thus, if the Creation begins when the Son, or *that which* shall be the Son, is posited *ex actu puro in potentiam*, i.e., posited as a potency distinct from the Father, then the Son is also posited before all aeons (πρὸ πάντων αἰώνων) - as Hebrews 1:2 declares of the Son: δι' οὗ καὶ τοὺς αἰῶνας ἐποίησεν, by whom he has made the aeons. "He by whom the world-times are posited can himself belong to no particular aeon. He is before all aeons, and *not* a creature at all."[47]

To summarize our view of Time and Eternity, we distinguish - in addition to absolute or supra-temporal eternity (which is not a time at all, but is above all time) three aeons or times. "Only with the Creation does there begin a distinction of aeons or times. That is, we distinguish (A) the pre-temporal eternity which is posited *by* the creation as past; (B) the time of the Creation itself, which is the *present*; (C) the time which everything is supposed to reach by means of the Creation and which is a kind of future eternity..."

"The world or creation has not arrived at this time, this third time; it has become arrested in the second time.... which simply repeats itself over and over but cannot break through....into the third time. This arrested time, whose schema is the series A+A+A, *this merely apparent* time..., which is only an *epoch* of the true time, is the time of *this* world in which we live.... only one member of the great system of times which was in the divine intention - hence the old lament that under the son, i.e., in the creation, nothing new comes to pass, one day is like the other, today as tomorrow, tomorrow as today, everything going around in a dreary circle of monotonously recurring phenomena - this apparent time, which as such has neither a true past nor a true future, is not the true time. For the true time is not just one time which ever repeats itself, but it itself a series of times. But a series of times, i.e., *true*, *actual* time, was posited with and only with the Creation. So the act by which the Creation is posited is also the act which posits time in general. This act is itself *before* all aeons....[48]

An old oriental apophthegm says of apparent time: it rests without ceasing to flow and it flows without ceasing to rest. It rests since it is always the same =A, and it flows since it is always an other (namely another A). It rests since it never makes progress but always remains A, and it flows since it is always passing away and is constantly required to posit itself again. Because the time of the world is in every moment the whole, and the whole constantly follows the whole, ...men have compared its continuity with that of a stream... Heraclitus referred to this never-remaining-the-same when he penetratingly remarked: 'no one climbs twice into the same stream' or....'no one emerges from the same stream into which he entered.' The whole stream is in every moment an other and yet in each moment the same, for the whole always follows the whole. If I understand by A not part of the stream but the whole stream, then I can say of it: it is A+A+A....in constant movement, yet always the same, like the time of this world."[49]

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[46] pp. 498-500 [47] p. 503 [48] pp. 501f

(v) The "true Exposition" concluded.[50]

Now we can see that "in the beginning" (verse one) is to be repeated three times, each time with a different meaning. (a) "In the beginning was the Logos." Here "in the beginning" means absolutely eternal being. (b) "In the beginning he was with God". Here "in the beginning" means "from eternity": from eternity the Logos was with God. And likewise (c) "in the beginning the Logos was God", i.e., "before the present world-order, which is posited by the Fall and by which the Logos became an extra-divine person." "It does not say 'he is God'.... From John's standpoint, at the beginning of his story, He was God and is He who will be God, but he is not God. This is not Arianism, for Arianism would say: there was a time when he was not, or a moment when he was not. But according to our view, there is no moment when he was not, although not in every moment is it to be said: he is God, i.e., actually. Natura, of course, he is God in every moment."[51]

"The strongest definition of the deity of Christ is undoubtedly this: the Son is so essentially God, that the Father himself would not be God without the Son. But in his pure absolute eternity..., God is not distinguishable as God, for there he is nothing but the necessary being. But God is essentially freedom, yet in the freedom vis-a-vis his original being (Ursein) (for only therein can his freedom consist), in the freedom to be Creator, he sees himself and is only when he has the Son who alone makes the creation possible for him, because he has in himself alone that by which he can bring back again into potency the other, contrary being. Hence only he who has the Son is actually God.... The Son belongs to the essence of God, i.e., to God as such. To this extent he is, of course, posited by the *essence* of God (*necessitate naturae divinae*) if one understands thereby the divinity (*Gottheit*) of God but not God as mere substance."[52]

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[49] p. 502n ("from another MSS") [50] pp. 503-510 [51] p 503f

"*In him was life*" (verse 4). This means: "he has life in himself", and here the story moves a step forward. "In him was life" is, so to speak, the opposite of "he was God", for it means he is now *outside* the Father "as an independent personality who has life in himself". That the extra-divine being is meant, is even clearer from the following phrase.

"*And this life was the light of men.*" "By allowing the Son to be outside him, the Father has *given* him to the human race" as its light and salvation. Therefore the text continues:[53]

"*And this light shineth in the darkness.*" "Darkness" equals Paganism, and "shining" is something involuntary and natural. Hence the phrase expresses precisely the "purely *natural* operation of this light in Paganism. (Cf. Isaiah 42:6, 19; 49:6)

"*And the darkness comprehended it not*". "This is just what *we* say of Paganism: in Paganism is Christ, but not as such; not that he is not there, but he is not comprehended as such. For the Pagan, Christ is a merely natural potency, a purely natural light."[54]

"*There was a man sent from God whose name was John*... He was not the light, but came to bear witness to the light." (vv. 6-8) Here the author continues "the history of that still undefined personality" on into Christianity, mentioning first the fore-runner of Christ. Notice that there "is not an immediate transition from pure divinity into human form." The conventional interpretation understands everything from the fourth verse on as referring to the Incarnation. But "the Light shines in the darkness" represents "the whole of Paganism as well as Judaism", and this lies in between "the demi-urgic function in verse three and the appearance in humanity."[55]

"*The true Light which lightens every man was coming into*

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[52] p.504 [53] p. 505 [54] p.506 [55] p. 507

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the world" (v. 9). Here the true light is opposed to the light which merely shines - Christianity is contrasted with Paganism (not with John the Baptist, who was not a light of any kind, but merely a witness). Of course, the true light was always in the world as the demi-urgic potency, through whom the world was made (as verse 10 says), yet "the world knew him not", i.e., he was not recognized. (Verse 10, therefore, does not refer to his Incarnation, but his presence in Paganism). Now, however, he "enlightens every man" and can be comprehended in his truth.[56]

"He came to his own" - the Jews who already knew him as the coming Christ. εἰς τὰ ἴδια means "to his race (Geschlecht), ad familiam, ad gentem suam." But "his own received him not." Notice that the world (kosmos) "knew him not", the darkness "comprehended him not", but the Jews "received him not." They knew him, they comprehended him as the Son of God, but they rejected him. "Now that he appears as a person, the time of uncomprehended operation is over, and the time of comprehension and therefore of free acceptance is come."[57]

"But to all who received him... he gave power ('possibility') to become children of God" (verse 12). Here John moves completely into the personal mode of speech. Now the divine birth, broken by the Fall, is restored in those who believe. And now "the end reveals what was in the beginning":

"The Word" - John again takes up the abstract term: "this Subject which is now fitted out" with its predicates - "became flesh and dwelt among us, and we saw his glory as the glory of the only-begotten Son of the Father." (verse 14) That is, "we saw in him that glory which derived from his original divinity, his being-one with the Father; we saw in him....One in whom there is in truth only the Father himself." This Subject, who comes from heaven, i.e., from original divinity, reveals himself as true Son (hence, as the Father) only in the Incarnation.

"This is the remarkable end of that history of the beginning of things, indeed, of being itself," which John presents in his prolog. To know this history - we do not mean "merely rational knowledge which is fundamentally nothing but a not-knowing" - is "worth more than all other knowledge."[58]

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[56] pp. 507f [57] pp. 508f [58] pp. 509f

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C. Christ's Pre-existence in Old Testament Religion[59]

Judaism - Old Testament religion - is seen by Schelling as at once shackled Paganism and potential, still-hidden Christianity. It is not something positive, but a means to an end.[60] Christ is the potency of Paganism, strange to Judaism. Judaism restrained and finally destroyed the matter of Christ who then arose free, putting an *end* to Paganism, Old Testament religion and Revelation alike.

a. Christ's "double history"[61]

Christ, or the mediating potency, has a "double history". "There is, so to speak, a *historia sacra* and a *historia profana* of its activity." (a) The profane or *natural* history of the mediating potency works itself out in natural (Mythological) religion, "the sphere of Christ's general activity (which he does not exercise *as* Christ)" - "The moments of the process which produces Mythology are only the different moments of this natural activity of the mediating potency." (b) The *sacred* history is Christ's *personal* activity in Revelation: Christ is "the personal cause of all Revelation." It is this *historia sacra* of Christ in Old Testament religion (going right back to the Patriarchal period) which here interests Schelling.

b. Old Testament Revelation presupposes Relative Monotheism

Revelation is a general term, but Schelling uses it here to refer specifically to the self-disclosure of the *true* God.

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[59] Lecture 29, i.e., pp. 511-543 [60] pp. 540f [61] p. 511

Every revelation is a definite act, hence it effects change, and this implies a prior state of affairs. Now what is the pre-condition of Revelation? It is the God of Relative monotheism (= Elohim in the Old Testament, and Ouranos among the Pagans), for, as we have seen, "the human consciousness naturally posits God." This natural or relative monotheism - in which "mankind as a whole, and therefore consciousness even for example in Abraham, has an immediate relation only to the God who is one-sidedly or 'falsely' One" - is the starting point for the activity of the mediating potency which proceeds to operate "naturally" in Mythology and "personally" in Revelation. Revelation is the personal self-disclosure of the "true God" in the place of, and mediated by, the God who is relatively One. The true God is not the original God, but the One who is "brought forth", and therefore "revealed to the consciousness which does not know him."[62]

c. The manner of Christ's operation in the Old Testament[63]

How did Christ, the mediating potency, operate in the Old Testament? How is he related to the first God (the God of relative monotheism) on the one hand, and to the true God on the other? The answer, Schelling believes, is to be found in the account of Abraham's temptation (Genesis 22) which is archetypal for the whole sequence of Old Testament revelations.

In this story, God (Elohim) tempted Abraham by commanding him to sacrifice his son, Isaac. Now, Elohim is the God of

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[62] pp. 512f Cf. Part I, pp. supra. [63] pp. 514ff.

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Relative Monotheism, the God who ruled the consciousness of the nations of mankind; hence we must recognize the pagan influence at work in Abraham.

> "Consider that at about the same time there were whole peoples, including peoples of the same race as Abraham, who saw it as a divine command to sacrifice in certain cases the best loved children, i.e., the only child or the first born child. We would have to set aside all historical probability if we did not assume that the principle by which Abraham was directly tempted or solicited to perform that act, was essentially the same as that which mislead those peoples."[64]

But "just as Abraham stretched out his hand to slay his son, the angel of Jehovah called to him and prevented him from laying his hand on the boy." Here we see the mediation of the "true God" (the "angel" of Jehovah, i.e., the "appearance" of Jehovah) by the "false" God. This is what the story really means when it says that the Angel of Jehovah appeared and prevented the execution of the command given by Elohim.

> "He who is called Elohim is the substance of consciousness. The Angel of Jehovah, however, is not something substantial, but one who simply 'becomes' in consciousness, one who just 'appears'. He is not in consciousness substantia but always only actu, just the 'angel' of Jehovah, i.e., an appearance, a revelation of Jehovah. Hence (the angel of the Lord) constantly presupposes the Elohim as substance, or medium of his appearance.... Strictly speaking, neither of the two is, as such, the true God, for the true God appears only when he negates the preceding insofar as it is not the true God.... So the true God is mediated in the Old Testament by the 'false' God and, so to speak, is bound to the latter."[65]

Now, as in the Abraham story, so in the whole of the Old Testament, revelation of the true God presupposes Paganism as the condition and medium of its reality. Old Testament Revelation presupposes a ceaseless tension between the true God and the God of Paganism, a tension in which the true God comes to be, hence a tension necessary to God's self-generation, but also one which indicates the limits of Old Testament Revelation.

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[64] p. 514. This explanation helps us to understand a story which is not without difficulties for modern readers, says Schelling. Can God directly encounter a human being? Is God in character in tempting so devout a man to perform so unnatural an act? Did not God enjoin the shedding of blood after Cain's fratricide?

[65] p.515

> "When the higher potency, which is the cause of all Revelation, overcomes the opposing principle, it brings forth in it the true God as appearing. Thus, from God's side, Revelation is not possible unless he is immediately, in consciousness, an other, unless he becomes unlike himself in consciousness. But, in negating himself in this non-mediated being, he mediates himself to himself, and so in fact produces himself in consciousness. Without such a self-generation in consciousness, there would be no Revelation at all."[66]

It appears that for Schelling the tension or conflict between Jehovah (or his "appearance") and Elohim (the God who, pluralised, is the god of Paganism) is, so to speak, Christ's struggle with himself. For Christ, we said, has "a double history", and here in Old Testament religion his personal activity (his historia sacra as cause of Revelation) is struggling with his blind or natural activity (his historia profana as the mediating potency of Paganism), so that "he mediates himself to himself". In the end (i.e., in his Sacrifice of himself) the "personality" wins, putting to death the natural potency, (in Christ's death died the power of Paganism), and therefore literally bringing to an end all Revelation which took Paganism as its principle.

> "The actual appearance of Christ is therefore more than just Revelation, because it negates the presupposition of Revelation and therewith Revelation itself. If we posit Paganism, Judaism and Christianity as the three

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[66] pp. 515f

> great forms of all religion, then the Revelation of the Old Testament is simply the Revelation which is operating through Mythology, Christianity is the Revelation which has broken through this shell (Paganism), thus cancelling out in the same way and at the same time, both Judaism and Paganism."[67]

d. The Successive Character of Old Testament Revelation

Schelling stresses the successive aspect of the three potencies in the Old Testament, and understands the concept of the "angel of Jehovah" as an objectively developing one. He disagrees with those theologians who identify the "angel" of Jehovah with the second divine person.[68] "To be sure, it is the second potency which is the real cause of Revelation, i.e., the cause of the appearance of Jehovah in the B of consciousness, but it is not this appearance itself."[69] The Malach Jehovah (i.e., the "angel", "appearance", "harbinger" of Jehovah) is different at different periods. In Genesis and the historical books, the Malach Jehovah is the B defined by A^2; the second potency makes the first its harbinger. In the Old Testament, the second personality has not broken through the second potency; it merely operates through it.

> "It makes the first and deepest principle B to be a medium of the appearance of the true God. It makes it the angel of Jehovah to whom everything worthy of God is ascribed, while things like the temptation of Abraham and even the temptation to idolatry are ascribed to the Elohim."[70]

To this extent, Jehovah always appears as having a double aspect. On the one side, on the "fore-part", he appears as

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[67] p. 516 [68] Note: this contradicts Hayner's account in P. C. Hayner, Reason and Existence, Leiden, E J Brill, 1967, p.163

[69] p. 520 [70] p. 522n

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avenging, jealous, blindly punitive and consuming (Cf. the "anger" of the Lord in Joshua 7, and Cf. Exodus 33:3f, Lev. 26:17, and Ex. 23:22f). On the other side, the "hind-side", he appears as compassionate, longsuffering and forgiving - and this is Jehovah proper. Jehovah says Moses may see his back, but none may see the Lord's face and live. Later on, however, in the prophets, the second potency is made the Malach of the third; it is the potency of the future, A^3, for which the A^2 itself now becomes objective.[71]

e. The Pagan Ground of Old Testament Religion[72]

Schelling emphasizes that, as we have seen, the people of Israel refrained from becoming just another polytheistic nation (Volk). Instead, "they held fast to the God who was once common to all mankind", the Lord of heaven and earth, the God of Abraham. The unity and spirituality of this God remained their chief dogma (although he disintegrated for mankind in general, forming the deities of Mythology). The prohibition against images became their first commandment.[73] Even during the wilderness wanderings, the true God could not break loose from the false God, but kept the latter as his premiss (See Amos 5:26f, Jer. 7:31ff), and hence as a true principle of the divine economy.

> "In the story of Abraham, the angel, the appearance of Jehovah, recognizes the one who had required the offering up of Isaac as identical with himself, and blesses Abraham because he had wanted to fulfil his command. If we maintain that Revelation does not need to negate its presupposition absolutely - this happened only when the end of all Revelation had come - then much will become comprehensible which must seem to us, in the Old Testament, partly unworthy of God and partly downright pagan,

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[71] pp. 523n [72] pp. 524-533 [73] pp. 517, 519f

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> like the clearly pagan character of many practices prescribed by the Mosaic legislation."[74]

To document his thesis "that the Revelation of the Old Testament has its ground and immediate presupposition in common with Paganism", which it limits but cannot negate, Schelling turns not to a full discussion of the Mosaic cultus but to certain of those puzzling customs and institutes which reveal clearly pagan features. Such an inquiry will also help us understand the relation of the strict Mosaic ceremonial-law to the freedom to which man was introduced by Christ.

(a) Circumcision. This religious custom the Israelites had in common with pagan peoples. "Abraham received the command to circumcise himself and all his masculine descendants." (Gen. 17:10-14) Moses "confirmed the command" and male circumcision eight days after birth became one of the "most binding prescriptions of the Mosaic Law." But circumcision is practiced by many peoples, and "usually by those who are the most ancient in terms of the mythological process, the Arabians, the Phoenicians, the Egyptians." Clearly, the custom pre-dated Abraham.

> "How could Jacob's son say" it would bring disgrace upon us to give our sister to an uncircumcised person, if Abraham's family had been the only circumcised in the world? So if circumcision was already practiced before Abraham's time and among pagan peoples, it must have its ground in the principle of Paganism, and the higher principle, which we assume to be present in both Abraham and Moses, had only to sanction this requirement, just as it negated or rejected other solicitations of the principle."[75]

Noting Philo's view that circumcision was recommended for reasons of health and cleanliness, Schelling insists that the practice was so widespread that it must also have had, in the beginning, a religious significance. He agrees with Spencer (in his *de legibus Hebraeorum ritualibus*) that it was connected with the phallic rites (*Phallagogien*) of pagan peoples, but thinks Spencer wrong in suggesting that "circumcision was introduced in order to prevent the *Phallosprocessionen* by the mutilation of this part: for circumcision is much older than the *Phallagogien*."[76] Herodotus says the custom arose among the Egyptians ἀπ᾽ἀρχῆς, from the most ancient times (Schelling cites *Lib*. II, c. 104).

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[74] p. 520 [75] p. 525

The origin of circumcision may be discerned in Mythology, when Kronos castrated his father Ouranos. "Hence Circumcision originated in the Kronic period of Mythology." For Schelling, it is a vivid way of saying that an earlier principle has been nullified or that a wild, untamed principle has been limited. As man became more humane, and as moral insight quickened, castration gave way to circumcision and finally to the circumcision of the heart" of Deuteronomy and Jeremiah.[77]

> "In the fragments of Sanchoniathon in Eusebius... circumcision is derived from Kronos... For it is a common way of putting things to say that the nullification of an earlier ruling principle is represented as the emasculation of the same. Connected with each such transition... were manifestations of fanatical orgiastic excess so that, for example, priests of Cybele emasculated themselves in holy passion, just as loathsome customs of the Orient - the castration of young men in great numbers and the consecration of them to the service of certain deities - also had their first cause in this mythological representation. (But) now the emasculation, i.e., the overcoming of an earlier, most ancient principle, was to be celebrated in a milder and more humane way, i.e., by circumcision... This view, or the view that circumcision expressed the limitation of the wild principle, is so much the more probable since in the Mosaic Law-book itself, the circumcision is interpreted morally as circum-

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[76] p. 526

[77] Deut. 10:16, 30:6; Jer. 4:4

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> cision of the heart, or of the wild, unbridled, headstrong. titanic aspect of the soul. The prophets, too, speak of it in the same sense. For example, Jeremiah 4:4 says: 'Circumcise yourselves to Jehovah (the true God) and remove the foreskin of your hearts, lest my wrath go forth like fire and burn such that none may quench it.' What is here called 'wrath' must be overcome in Revelation as well as in Paganism."[78]

(b) Dietary Regulations. Like Circumcision, dietary regulations were taken up out of Paganism into Old Testament religion. The "prohibition of certain foods" and the "division of animals into clean and unclean" are not natural or rational phenomena but religious. The pig, for example, has been widely banned since time immemorial. "According to Bochart, it is the subject of abomination for Phoenician, Ethiopian, Hindu and Egyptian alike." This aversion was "taken up out of Paganism into the Mosaic legislation." The pig was sacrificed in Egypt to Dionysus and among the Romans to Ceres and later to the Lares. "The priests of the komanic goddess (it corresponds to the moment of Urania) may not eat any swine-flesh nor may any such animal enter the city dedicated to her."[79]

(c) The Tabernacle. Schelling also sees a striking parallel between the tabernacle as Moses describes it, and ancient pagan shrines.

> "Whoever turns to the illustrations in the Description de l'Egypte will easily recognize the proto-types (Gegenbilder) of Mosaic prescriptions and descriptions - the carpets, the cherubs, the so-called mercy-seat, the tables with the shew-bread. The Ark of the Covenant recalled the holy boxes which played so great a role among pagan customs, and were common among the Phoenicians as among the Egyptians and later the Greeks. The material (Stoff) is here mythological."[80]

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[78] p. 527 [79] p. 528 [80] p. 528

(d) Sacrificial Offerings. As an example of the pagan or superstitious elements in the Old Testament, Schelling cites the elaborate instructions for the sacrifice of a red heifer in connection with the purification of those who had defiled themselves with a dead person: Deut. 19:1-13. "Red is the color of Typhon, and Plutarch, in de Isid. et Osir. c.22, expressly says: 'Take to sacrifice for him the red bull'..."[81]

(e) The Scape-goat. No less superstitious is the custom of sending a scape-goat into the wilderness on the great Day of Atonement (Lev. 16).

> "Two similar he-goats shall be set before Jehovah at the door of the Tabernacle. Then lots shall be cast upon both (goats), one lot for Jehovah and one for Azazel, i.e., the lot decides which of the two goats is to be brought to Jehovah as a burnt-offering, and which shall be allowed to go free. The latter would first be presented alive before Jehovah; then Aaron was to lay his two hands on its head, and confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel and lay them upon the goat and send him away into the wilderness....where he bears all their iniquities and remains in the wilderness forever."[82]

This Azazel, concludes Schelling, is not just "the wilderness", but a person or personality, just as Jehovah is. Azazel is not the devil, as Spencer thinks, but he is a theos antitechnos, a demon, whose habitation is the desert. There are elements of Mythology here. For the later Orientals, who were making the transition to civic life, the wilderness is the place of all horror; and the idea of evil is connected with that earlier period when everything was wilderness. Azazel is the essence (Wesen) of this past.

> "There in lonesome places, as habitation of the past into which the power and noise of present circumstances had

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[81] pp. 528f [82] p. 529

> not yet penetrated, the Greek relegated his Pan and the essence which belonged to him, the melancholy reminder of the earlier principle. Therein also the imagination of the Israelite placed the Schedim and Seirim who clearly are a kind of Pan, Satyr or Panic essence, and whose dwelling is conceived to be in the wilderness. Therefore the Israelites allowed no sacrifices in the open. Every offering, even in the wilderness, must be brought before the holy tent. The field, the open space, belongs to the general, the unbounded God. Jehovah was not such a general God. He was personal, and therefore comprehensible.... with a name. Therefore he could be worshipped not in the open, but in a house... or at least a tent. Whoever made his offering in the open, would be looked upon.... as if he intended to offer it to the Schedim." (Lev. 17:7)[83]

Since the goat is not merely sent into the wilderness, but is sent to Azazel and allowed to go free, there is surely here, in addition to the removal of sin, the survival of an older superstition. This view is supported by the fact that "the name Azazel is not explained, but presupposed as one well known to the people." Although for the Hebrew, Azazel is now a creature of the past, still he must be recognized, "just as Typhon in Egypt, to whom the wilderness also belonged, was conceived as having been overcome, and yet was still honored by individual sacrifices." Clearly, "Revelation recognizes Paganism's reality."[84]

(f) The Cleansing from Leprosy, in Lev. 14, seems a similar case in point. The prescription says: "two birds shall be taken; the one shall be slaughtered and the other dipped in the blood of the slain bird and then released into the open field." Was this supposed to propitiate the God of the free life of nature by whose who now enjoyed established civic life, circumscribed by laws? Do we have here echoes of ancient pagan pro-

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[83] pp. 531f [84] p. 532

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pitiation of nature-deities - the freeing of consecrated flocks?[85]

f. Explanations of the Pagan Elements in the Old Testament[86]

How are we to explain the presence in the Israelite cultus of these pagan features, these superstitious elements, the irrational appearances unworthy of God and the strict legalism?

(i) Spencer's theory of divine condescension held that God "indulged the Israelites and permitted them" some Pagan rites, seeking simply to relate such practices to the true religion. This theory at least recognizes the presence of the pagan element in the Old Testament, but it implies that it was something fortuitous, accidental, "merely a divine condescension". Schelling, however, sees Paganism as a necessary process, and the pagan ground of Mosaic religion as therefore having a necessity about it. Understandably and inevitably, the Old Testament Jews were practical pagans (polytheists) for whom "Revelation" is what is accidental!

> "By no religion of antiquity was any people subjected to so intolerable a servitude, reaching into all its activities and covering every commission and omission, as the Israelite. In fact, one can scarcely believe that what this religious law prescribed was always and at every time observed by everyone."
>
> "....Though monotheists in theory and according to the Law, the children of Israel are in practice almost without exception polytheists. The substance of their consciousness is really Paganism. True religion is simply

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[85] pp. 532f. Schelling cites: "the sacred bulls of the Persian Artemis, grazing freely without herdsmen, and marked with a torch, the sign of the goddess" (in Plutarch's Life of Lucullus K. 24); "the seven herds of sacred bulls which grazed to Helios in Sicily" (in the Odyssey XII); and the mob of horses consecrated to Julius Caesar at the Rubicon, and released to rove freely (in Seuton's Life of Caesar); and the release of birds in modern times at the coronation of the French Kings.

[86] pp. 534-539

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> accidental, i.e., revealed, to their consciousness. Again, they have run through pretty much every stage of polytheism. From the melaecheth haschamaim, the queen of heaven, with whom all real polytheism began - from Baal and Ashtaroth up to the abominations of the Phoenicians and Canaanites, and even up to the second turning point of Mythology, the Cybele (under the name Mizplezeth ....), none of the mythological stages are missing."[87]

This so-called "tendency to idolatry" is found among the cultured Israelites (even the enlightened rulers) as well as the uncultured, and lasted till post-exilic times: "it disappeared among the Jews as soon as they returned from the Babylonian Exile." The usual explanation cites Jewish exposure to the Persians, "among whom a more spiritual religion, a kind of monotheism, was dominant." But for Schelling the real explanation is that the Jewish people were caught up in the mythological process which affected all mankind, and lost their inclination toward polytheism only when this process "attained its goal in mankind in general."

> "This co-incidence is a proof that polytheism is not something accidental, but a kind of general malady which, like a contagious disease, had to run its destined course. It gripped not only one particular people but the whole human race, and even the chosen people could not escape it until the process lost its power (and subsided) in the rest of mankind."[88]
>
> The phrase "tendency to idolatry"..."makes it appear that monotheism was the original form, and polytheism the secondary and accidental, whereas it was really the other way around - polytheism is the basic, original form, and monotheism is the secondary, set up in opposition to the former."[89]
>
> (ii) The Typological explanation (Typische), which is

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[87] Schelling distinguishes Idolatry from the worship of Jehovah through images. When Jeroboam set up two golden calves in Bethel and Dan, the pagan basis is clear, but this image-worship is not idolatry proper (I Kgs 16:31, II Kgs 3:2), p. 536

[88] p. 536 [89] p. 535

"more generally accepted," holds that the numerous acts prescribed in the Mosaic Law are typi, proto-types, pre-figurements of "relations which have appeared in their truth only in Christ," (especially the great Sacrifice of the New Testament). Schelling agrees, but adds that Paganism, too, has such models or pre-figurements. In fact, "the truly proto-typical aspect of Mosaism is precisely what is pagan in it." Mosaic religion is incomprehensible if one does not recognize in it both the reality of Paganism and the actual presence of Revelation.[90]

> "Revelation could not immediately negate the tension which was once objectively posited (the tension out of which the mythological process arose). The need to propitiate the angered deity by sacrifice is not aroused by Revelation. Moses' instructions did not establish sacrifice in general nor individual sacrifices, but simply gave directive prescriptions for the same...
>
> "When the Jew brought his offering prescribed by the Law, he really followed the same necessity, the same impulse, which the Pagan followed in bringing his sacrifice. All that distinguishes the two is the prophetic element in the former, the future which is hinted at."[91]

In the prophets, of course, Jehovah disapproves the offerings which he himself had earlier willed. "What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices... I am tired of enduring them" (Isaiah 1:11, 14). Here, says Schelling, the Spirit, the potency of the future, speaks. Prophecy transcends the Law as the Mysteries transcend Mythology. "Prophetism as such was strictly speaking the potency which was opposed to the Law - it was the Dionysiac, so to speak, in the Old Testament." An understanding of Prophetism is as essential to a full understanding of Old Testament religion as an understanding of the Mysteries is to our comprehension of Greek religion.[92]

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[90] p. 534 [91] pp. 537, 539n [92] p. 539n. (Cf. p.537)

Thus Paganism (indirectly) and Judaism (directly) are proto-typical of Christianity. Just as the goal of any movement operates in that movement as its final cause, so Christianity is present in the earlier two religions.

g. Concerning the World-historical Destiny of the Jews [93]

Paul ascribes to Mosaic religion "no more reality than he ascribes to Paganism." Why then were the Israelites chosen from among all earth's peoples to be the bearers of divine revelation? In Schelling's view, it was because they were not destined to make a great and enduring name in world history.

> "Historically, their (selection) is attributed to the personal virtues of their ancestor Abraham and the promises given to him. But considered absolutely, the reason is.... that the Israelite people was destined least of all to have its own history according to the standard of other peoples, least of all to be possessed by that world-spirit which inspired other nations to establish great monarchies," etc.[94]

Though commanded to be separate, the Israelites remained in contact with idolatrous peoples, and were almost continually under their seductive influence. Yet "there is scarcely a trace of evidence" that the religious institutions or public worship of the Jews ever itself had any religious or moral influence on other peoples. "Judaism, strictly speaking, was never something positive. It can only be defined either as shackled Paganism or as potential, still-hidden, Christianity; and it was just this middle position that was fatal to it."[95]

"Christ was more for the Pagan than for the Jew," in the sense that the pagan element taken up into Christianity -

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[93] pp. 539-543 [94] p. 540 [95] pp. 540f

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the human Son of God - made Christianity easier for the Pagan but difficult for the Jew. Hence Paul's sadness on account of his "kinsmen by race" (Rom. 9 and 11).

> "Christ as such is not to be understood on the basis of Judaism. Judaism gives the matter of his existence, but he himself, strictly speaking, is the potency of Paganism, and this potency is strange to Judaism. Therefore the Jews had to destroy his matter, and out of what was destroyed arose free the potency of Paganism."[96]
>
> "The Jews were aware of this. The influence of Christ on the pagans, who in this way became part of Revelation and of the promises, aroused their jealousy. They looked upon Christ as sent merely for the Pagans, not, as in later times, as an imposter, but rather as perhaps an emanation of the principle of Paganism, and saw Christianity itself as just a modification of Paganism. 'You who came out of Paganism might worship him,' says the Jew Tryphon, 'but we, worshippers of the God who made this Christ, need neither to know him nor to worship him'. (Neander: Kirchengeschichte Part I, Vol. I, p. 380)."[97]

So the Jews were just a means to an end! When they failed to become Christians, "they excluded themselves from the great course of history. They had to cease to be a people, and were dispersed and scattered among the other peoples. They were something only as bearers of the future." And yet, though homeless and exiled, they are still a "reserved" people, in the sense of "reserved for the Kingdom of God into which they are destined to enter last. God's promise to them will be kept, but with divine irony: 'the first shall be last'." "The day will surely come when they will be taken up into the divine economy." "Auferat Deus omnipotens velamen ab oculis vestris" - God almighty will take away the covering from your eyes. Meanwhile, enlightened policy will "no longer withhold from them necessary rights."[98]

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[96] p. 541n [97] p. 542 (and 542n) [98] p. 543

CHAPTER THREE

THE INCARNATE CHRIST[1]

Now the world became quiet. The time was at hand The pre-existent Personality described in the previous chapter is to appear as Christ.

> "First everything has to occur which could occur merely externally. The purely external conquest of the opposed principle required no power, no appearance from the heavens... and the externally obvious end of Paganism (not the end in general) was attained with Romanism. The later Roman consciousness represents the complete indifference toward this process. It itself did not represent a moment in the process, but all earlier moments flowed together in it, and it showed the impossibility of further advance... by going back into the past, re-awakening the ancient Oriental religion with whose superstitions Rome at the time of Christ was filled.
>
> "A general feeling was then prevalent over the world that something completely new and unexpected must come... The whole world, and even the power of the earlier religions, had become silent before the external political superiority of the Romans... This external empire was, so to speak, the ground in which the seed of the divine Kingdom was to be sown. At the same time, the Jewish particularism had to be brought closer to its expiration under the Roman yoke. Now when this time was fulfilled ... God sent His Son, born of a woman, and born even under the (external) Law."[2]

A. The Incarnation of Christ

a. Concerning the Intelligibility of the Incarnation[3]

We have arrived at "the most important and most essential moment in the whole development": the Incarnation.

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[1] This Chapter summarizes Lectures 30, 31, 32, and half of Lecture 33; i.e., W, VI, pp. 544-633.

[2] pp. 544f

[3] pp. 545-547

Some feel, of course, that the Incarnation of the Son of God is an inscrutable mystery (mysterium imperscrutabile) for which it is impious or presumptuous to seek a scientific explanation. But Schelling is not deterred by such objections and points out that many things once considered incomprehensible have come later to be understood.[4]

Now when we deal with "the voluntary incarnation of Christ", we are dealing with a question of fact but not one that can be sensually perceived. Hence our problem is to understand it, to "think" it, to see what is meant by it, else we shall have "no fact at all." Even those who regard the Incarnation as an impenetrable mystery should be able to say what they mean by the word. As a matter of fact, theology has always tried to assign a meaning, but whether those traditional meanings are admissible must now be determined, for even if a positive explanation were to elude us it would be important to know what the Incarnation is not.

b. Critique of a Traditional Doctrine of the Incarnation[5]

An idea "that has been around for a long time" holds that the man Jesus was not conceived and born as other men are, but was "specially created by divine omnipotence." Thereupon, the second divine personality simply connected himself with this man, "allying himself with what was most inward and most perfect in him, up to the point of identity of person, so that one can say: one and the same person is God and man." On this view, the deity itself underwent no change. It did not become humanity. Something was merely added to it. Hence the divine person is said to have merely "put on" this independently-existing human nature already created for it.[6]

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[4] pp. 545f [5] pp. 548-552

This traditional theory is trying to say that Jesus is both God and man but, in Schelling's view, it completely fails to accomplish its purpose intelligibly. Its unsatisfactory aspects and implications may be summarized as follows.

(a) If the man Jesus is created independently by God, then the humanity of Christ becomes "physically independent of the Logos and of the will of the Logos to exist as man."[7] (b) If the Logos merely "connected himself with a man", then "he has emptied himself of nothing" - contrary to plain New Testament teaching.[8] (c) If the Logos undergoes no change in the Incarnation, then the meaning of *kenosis* (self-emptying) is reduced to mere *non-usus* (i.e., the view that Jesus simply refrains from using or demonstrating his true nature).[9] (d) As a result, the Logos does not become truly personal, and the humanity serves to veil rather than reveal the divinity of Christ. Indeed, the humanity of Jesus is really negated in this hypostatic union.[10]

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[6] p. 548 [7] p. 550 [8] p. 550

[9] p. 551 [10] pp. 550, 554

Over against this view, Schelling holds that the subject which became man was not the pure deity, but that extra-divine divine potency who was in the *form* of God, and who truly emptied himself precisely of this *morphe theou* by his incarnation (an act of his *true* divinity, for only the *God* in him is capable of that self-emptying), and truly assumed the form of a servant (*morphe doulou*) through which the original deity becomes most luminously visible ("we beheld his glory"). There is no need for (i) a *special act* of divine omnipotence to *create* the man Jesus, or (ii) a *special act* of the divine Logos by which he *added* something to himself.[11] As Schelling puts it:

> "If the Incarnation is an emptying, then the humanity or human nature of Christ must be just the pure *result* of this self-emptying, of this act in *which he* emptied himself not of deity - for he makes this visible again by his act - but of the *morphe theou*. The man Christ came into being not *merely* because of, but in-and-through the fact that he who was in the form of God willed to empty himself of this. If the Logos *merely joins* itself with the man... then it has *not* emptied itself but remains what it was."[12]
>
> "There is a parallel in 2 Cor. 8:9 - "You know the grace of our Lord, that he, though he was rich, for your sakes became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich." This 'being rich' (πλούσιος ὤν) corresponds to the 'being in the form of God', just as the 'he became poor' (ἐπτώχευσεν) corresponds to the 'he emptied himself'."[13]
>
> (Hence)... the *kenosis* is not a getting rid of the essential deity but of the *unessential morphe theou* which, strictly speaking, was only accidental as far as the Son was concerned."[14]

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[11] p. 549 [12] pp. 550f [13] p. 551 [14] p. 552

c. The *Subjectum Incarnationis*

It is "nothing less than absurd", in Schelling's view, to speak vaguely of an incarnation of *God*, for "God did not become man, even though he who became man is God."[15] The Church Fathers "warned that the union of deity and humanity must not be a μετάπτωσις or a μεταβολή of the deity;" and St John says only that the Logos *was* God, i.e., only *in the beginning*; and St. Paul affirms only that God became manifest in the flesh, not that he *became* flesh (I Tim. 3:16). Nevertheless, the common theory persists in regarding the Logos before the Incarnation as pure God. Then, since no change in the deity is conceded, the Logos is not recognized as *becoming man* in any genuine way. All that is admitted is "a mere ἀνάληψις , a mere taking up (*Aufname*) of manhood into the deity."[16] Schelling's view avoids this outcome by conceiving the subject of the incarnation to be not pure God - nor man, of course - but a "middle", namely, the Logos who *was* God in the beginning but, "after what happened in between", is *now* the extra-divine divine Subject (*aussergöttlich-göttliches Subject*),[17] the divine which is posited as extra-divine.

> "There is here no transition from being purely God (reinen *Gottsein*) to being man, but only a transition from being *en morphe theou* to being *en morphe doulou*, i.e., a trasition from one state of being to another It is not the divine nature itself, but only 'the divine subject which is posited outside the divine' (*das aussergöttlich=göttlich gesetzte Subject*) who,

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[15] pp. 556f [16] p. 554 [17] pp. 555. Cf. p. 553

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> surrendering his extra-divine majesty, is acknowledged as man. The immediate subject of the Incarnation is, for us, not the Logos as God, but as extra-divine-divine personality. But for this very reason we can correctly say 'he became man'. It is not necessary for us, as it is for the other theory, first to posit outside one another the subjectum incarnationis and the man Jesus, and then to bring forth artificially the unity of the divine and human nature only by a subsequent unification which, in its turn, can be contrived only by a violent negation of the independence of the man. Our presentation permits us to bring forth this unity as something positive..."[18]

> "...the most careful theology has never spoken literally of an incarnation of God, but only of a divine person... 'God became man' means: the divine became man, yet not the divine, but rather the extra-divine aspect of the divine (das Aussergöttliche des Göttlichen) became man. There are here from the beginning not two personalities, one of which must be negated, ... but only one person, the divine, which reduces its extra-divine being to human being and precisely thereby appears itself as divine. The human being is its being; it has willed it and given it to itself, but for that reason it itself is beyond this being... As far as the divine which remained in the extra-divine is concerned, the Incarnation is not a becoming-other but simply a becoming-visible..."[19]

The Logos did not cease to be outside God, nor did it negate its essential divinity. Both must remain if the Logos is to be truly Mediator, for "it must be relatively independent of the two which are to be mediated." The point about the Incarnation is simply that the Logos, in its extra-divinity, divested itself of the divine form: "the process of becoming-man is none other than this emptying, and the humanity is (not the veil but) the pure expression, the pure product of this emptying, without the material co-operation of another cause."[20]

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[18] pp. 555f [19] p. 557 [20] p. 558, 559

Schelling believes his explanation fulfills the two requirements of the old rule: ne distrahantur naturae, neve confundantur, for "it does not tear the natures asunder but allows them to be united personally, nor does it mix them, since the human and divine are related as substantial and supra-substantial", impersonal and personal, respectively, making them by nature unmixable.[21]

d. The Purpose of the Incarnation (its Ethical Aspect)[22]

The purpose of the Incarnation is two-fold: (i) to overcome the opposing Principle (B) not just externally but in its ground, and (ii) to overcome the Will of the Father, "causing him to turn his true essence and gracious nature once more toward mankind."[23]

We have already seen (a) that the principle B "set us at variance with God and separated us from him"; (b) that the mediating potency operating in its extra-divinity (in Paganism and Judaism) effected only an external conquest of that principle; and (c) that the pagan cultus, "a constantly recurring propitiation or overcoming of that opposing principle", never effected more than "a kind of healing which removes the symptoms while leaving the cause of the sickness intact".[24] Now, therefore, we can see all this as but prelude for "the true and perfect reconciliation" accomplished by the incarnate Christ who finally subdued the opposing Principle and turned the Father's Will around.

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[21] p. 558 [22] pp. 560f [23] p. 560 [24] p. 559

> "The Father could not himself negate this Will... Man could not negate it, being completely powerless and weak over against it. Even the Mediating potency... could not negate it by merely necessary or natural action.
>
> Will can be overcome only by will, indeed, only by a will which, because it is stronger than death, no will, not even the strongest, can possibly withstand. What was needed was not a physical but a moral conquest of the Will, and this was possible only by the most complete but at the same time completely free submission to the deity. This was accomplished by the mediating potency in the place of man..."[25]
>
> "The reconciling potency is in complete freedom over against God and is in no way required to make that sacrifice of himself... But Christ acquired sovereignty over the external principle only in order to sacrifice it and with it to sacrifice himself in this extra-divine glory.
>
> The final act - and everything that went before really pointed to this and led up to it - was the sacrifice of the mediating personality itself who, as the guiltless, stood in the place of the guilty. But it could not succeed directly in actually sacrificing itself; for this the incarnation was necessary. The decision to sacrifice is certainly a wonder of the divine mind. Here the divine breaks through the natural. Here is the highest revelation."[26]

e. The Manner of the Incarnation (its Physical Aspect)[27]

The Incarnation itself, i.e., the actual "transition," is unquestionably an extraordinary event and "cannot be explained on the basis of the principles of the merely material world." We must "move up to supra-material causes," and then, extraordinary as it is, it will be "in the higher order of things not unnatural but natural and intelligible."[28]

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[25] p. 560 [26] p. 561 [27] pp. 562-5, plus a discussion of the part played by the Holy Spirit, pp. 569-571.

[28] p. 571. Schelling confesses doubt that he can "make everything clear down to the tiniest detail" (p. 562).

Now it is Schelling's thesis that "the mediating potency is itself the stuff, just as it is itself the cause, of its incarnation."[29] It has made itself - not its real self, but its extra-divine substantial being - the stuff, i.e., the material possibility, of the incarnation. This view must be carefully explained.

Schelling recalls two points elaborated elsewhere: first, that materiality and immateriality, being and non-being, are not absolutely opposed concepts; and second, that "what once was immaterial can only materialize itself by opposing something higher."[30] Now the Principle (B), originally immaterial, materialized itself in the moment that it assumed a material relation over against the higher potency (A^2).[31] In the same way, A^2 can materialize itself only in relation to A^3. After the Fall, these two potencies were in tension, but now in the Incarnation the second potency (the Logos, the Christ) gives up the tension against the third potency (the Spirit) - "this happened precisely in the process we have called 'materializing'." This makes the third potency possible, and the second "identifies itself with it" - a moment which, accompanied by visible appearances, occurred in the Baptism of Christ. Here "the substantial nature of Christ made itself accessible to the Spirit, as Holy Spirit."[32]

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[29] p. 562 [30] Ibid. [31] p. 563 (This is the moment designated by Urania in The Philosophy of Mythology)

[32] pp. 563, 564

> "Thus the first ground of the humanity of Christ is established by the fact that the second potency materialized itself over against the higher. Naturally, it is not the personality as *such*, but the natural, the substantial, which materializes itself in such a way, and you see here again how necessary it is to define that personality not merely as *personality* but also as *natural* potency, to ascribe to it a *substantial* being..." ("The *substantial* is precisely what is independent of God in him" and "the Logos, according to his *substance* reduced himself to the material".[33])

> "But the mere materializing did not mean that it was yet a *creature*, so the extra-divine divinity is completely stripped away as it assumed *creaturely* form. Thus, 'it materializes itself' means: it makes itself the stuff of an organic process, of the highest organic process of course, for it is to step into the place of man, it must be instead of man. But as demi-urgic potency it is free and accessible to all, excluded from *nothing*. Since, through its *own* activity, it makes itself the stuff of an organic process (always understood as effected against the higher potency which, to be sure, concurred therewith), it is completely free to choose the place for this materialization, and to choose for the purpose - as mother - an already living human being, in order to be born as man from woman... When Christ gave up all sovereignty, *he gained only a right to be outside God*, not negating but...confirming his extra-divinity, so that he can be eternal mediator... He committed himself to the extra-divine being by the incarnation."[34]

Thus Schelling holds that the second potency, the Logos, the pre-existent Christ, materialized himself, "in the power of the higher potency" (the Spirit), and made himself (itself) the stuff or matter or possibility of a future birth. As Mt. 1:20 says: "that which is conceived in her is ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου , of the Holy Spirit" which means "in the power of the Holy Spirit", says Schelling, taking the ἐκ not *sensu materiali* as indicating the *causa*

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[33] p. 571   [34] pp. 564f. Cf. p. 569

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ex qua, but *sensu potentiali*. Here, thinks Schelling, the evangelist said more than he understood![35]

Jesus, of course, cannot be called a "Son of the Holy Spirit". "The Spirit was active in that moment not σπερματικῶς but δημιουργικῶς ", not as seed but as architect. This may be understood as follows:

> "If A^2 becomes the stuff (i.e., = the first potency), then A^3 becomes (equal to) the second potency, i.e., the demiurgic function moves forward to the third potency. - Thus the first formation of that relatively material but also relatively immaterial foundation of the man Jesus. From this point the man Jesus is born just as is every other man, in a purely natural way."[36]
>
> "Another expression seems to be similarly instructive: the Holy Spirit has acted here merely οἰκονομικῶς . The scholars among the Church Fathers understood by the divine economy not merely the plurality of the divine personalities, but the relation, the order, by virtue of which they at the same time operated and appeared as successive potencies following one another."[37]

f. The Objective Historical Character of the Incarnation[38]

The birth of Christ has an absolutely objective truth. The reconciliation in Christ is an *objective* event which negates the divine Unwill *itself* (not just its *effect*). *After* the Incarnation, all pagan Mythology is seen as fable and illusion. These points are elaborated as follows:

> "The Subject which was in the beginning with God and which, indeed, was God in a sense - this Subject by which, in the course of time, everything was made, and which was then (after the Creation, since the Fall) *in the form of God* and the real Lord of human consciousness - this same Subject, when the time was

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[35] pp. 569, 570. Cf. also Lk.1:35 [36] p. 569

[37] pp. 569f [38] pp. 565-567

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fulfilled, was born at a determinate time as man. This birth is a final event, but one which is completely external, taking place entirely within the sphere of other external occurrences. This fact could not occur merely in the consciousness of mankind. Unlike the facts of mythology, it could not have a merely subjective-objective truth. For it, an absolutely objective truth was necessary. It must be something which takes place independently of human representations."[39]

"What was only subjective there in Paganism...must here occur objectively. What there was fable, here becomes truth. Precisely what the Pagans merely believed or imagined - that God exists in human form - now becomes manifest truth, seen with human eyes... A history such as we have just covered...could end only by such an event. Such a happening must bring such a story to a close. With this appearance, the former ecstatic history passes over into real history... The ecstatic consciousness which was outside all reality returned into the ground of reality."[40]

"He who was en morphe theou was, in this form, as natural potency, the principle of Paganism. When he emptied himself of this form unto death - in the one who died in such a way, died the whole of Paganism. After this fact, everything that the pagans had believed about gods in human form, or even about mortals to whom they ascribed unusual births, was seen as illusion. When the facts themselves occur, the mere shadow of the same disappears. Over against such an objective fact, which went on before the eyes of the disenchanted world, everything that had been earlier believed disappeared and turned into fable, even though initially it was not mere poetic fiction but was grounded in a certain subjective necessity. It is a well known fact that history since the appearance of Christ assumed a completely different meaning than it had before his appearance."[41]

B. The Person of Christ

a. The Sinlessness of Jesus[42]

This explanation helps us to understand better both the doctrine of the Person of Christ and specific doctrines associated therewith. For example, the descent of Jesus from David and the ancestors of the race, the absence of original sin in Jesus, and his sinlessness in general, now become more intelligible. Schelling holds (a) that although Christ created the first stuff of his organic-human being out of himself, he remains a descendent of the Fathers (David, the Patriarchs) through Mary his mother - just as the common theory claims.[43] But (b) he does not therefore inherit original sin through his mother! The common theory is in difficulty here, for it will not hold that Christ was created out of nothing so it assumes "a stuff in the mother which was supernaturally vivified". But this raises "the familiar difficulty that the human mother cannot be imagined as excluded from so-called original sin." In Schelling's explanation, however, the real "stuff" of the Incarnation is not "in the mother" but created by the Logos out of itself.[44] Furthermore, (c) the sinlessness of Jesus ("He became like us in all things except sin") can now be explained. Thus,

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[39] p. 565 [40] pp. 565f [41] p. 567 [42] pp. 571-574

> "if the first stuff for the humanity of Christ had been taken from this material world, then he would have participated according to his humanity in the general disorderliness (Ataxie) of this world. But if that basic stuff was not of this world,...if it became material only in the Actus of the Incarnation, then we can comprehend how this Principle - which materialized itself only over against the higher potency while it completely retained its spiritual, dominating characteristic over the lower - put on the stuff of this subordinate material world,

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[43] p. 571 [44] pp. 571f

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> without which actual man, i.e., a man just like us, would be impossible... and withstood the Ataxie ruling in the same. In this way a completely holy man was produced."[45]

True, since the substantial being of the Logos was extra-divine, independent of God, "it was in a way unholy, ...in the sense that everything that is outside God is unholy." But the incarnate Logos has made this being completely submissive and obedient to the Father, thus sanctifying it (John 10:36, 17:19) and making it "the vessel, the attracting potency of the Holy Spirit." In this submission, perfected by death, we see "the transition to the birth of the third potency" and the restoration of "the birth of God in three persons".

> "According to the unanimous witness of the New Testament, the real advantage of the Incarnation and of the death of Jesus, is that He thereby gained for us the Holy Spirit, hence the divine birth in the three persons, interrupted by the Fall, is restored; for this is what is meant when it says that we become again children of God. Because of this restoration of the whole divine being in man, the Apostles were instructed to baptize all peoples in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit."[46]

b. The Bodily State of Jesus (and the Christ Ideal in Art)[47]

Schelling repudiates docetic views. Although "even the flesh of Christ was sanctified," it was a flesh similar to ours. Nothing must be taken away from the true humanity of Christ. "He was completely and truly a man and not a ghost or appearance (Scheinkörper)."[48] Furthermore, this humanity of Christ existed "only by a continuous act of emptying." Christ says: "I have power to lose my life and to take it again," which, for Schelling, is a reference not to the death of Christ but to Christ's independent, extra-divine being. "The whole human life of Christ is maintained only by this will, hence He can say (Jn. 4:34): 'To be obedient to the Father - that is my food' (the means of preserving my human existence)."[49]

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[45] pp.573f [46] Ibid. [47] pp. 574-576 [48] pp 574f, 579.

> "Our hypothesis...cannot be compared with the view of the Valentinians - and others who were opposed to matter - who denied that Christ had a flesh similar to ours, and taught that he had brought a body with him from heaven with which he passed through Mary as through a channel. Our hypothesis is that Christ created the stuff of his incarnation out of his own substance which, however, was reduced from the divine in him to the potency of a man. We add that this potency was subjected to the very same organic process which is necessary for the birth of a real, actual man. Only first the possibility of incarnation must lie in him in order for him to be able actually to become man.
>
> Of course,...with the incarnation of Christ there came into the world a completely new element which was not there before. But this cannot derogate from the true humanity of Christ. Only a substantially new principle came thereby into the world, and it came not as something which had nothing in the world analogous to itself. Rather did the divestment of sovereignty consist precisely in the fact that it became subject to an existence analogous to that of other beings in this world and was subject to the same laws."[50]

Church Fathers and theologians have disagreed about "the external appearance of Christ." Was he the most beautiful of men (Ps. 45), or externally unattractive, even ugly (Cf. Isaiah 53), or neither? To Schelling, there was "an element which was not of this world," underlying the external physical aspect of Christ. "In this respect it seems to me that in sculpture and painting the true

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[49] pp. 584f [50] p. 574

Christ-ideal has not yet been represented."[51]

c. Concerning the Union of the Two Natures in Christ.[52]

Now a central question: How can Christ's original deity exist with his perfect humanity? As in the doctrine of the Trinity, so here in the doctrine of the Person of Christ, theology must sail between the twin cliffs of "too-much" and "too-little". In the former doctrine these dangers were Sabellianism and Arianism, in the latter, Eutychianism and Nestorianism.

> "Eutyches says: *before* the union there are two natures, *after* the union only one. Hence Eutyches' later disciples are called Monophysites... Opposed to him, Nestorius, *fuga oppositi*, is moved to suppose that *in* the union there are *two* subjects, two persons - divine and human. Both, Eutyches and Nestorius, agree that *before* the union there are two persons, but the orthodox view also assumes this... Hence the following schema:[53]

1.	2.	3.
Christ is *composed of* two natures but *not in* two natures	Christ is *composed of* two natures and is *in* two natures	Christ is composed of two natures but only *in one* person
(Eutychianism) (Monophysitism)	(Nestorius asserted no more although he did not distinguish nature and person).	(Orthodox view)

Schelling finds all these views unsatisfactory. The orthodox view is, in fact, only "a disguised Nestorianism", for it really recognizes *two* persons in Christ but proceeds forcefully to negate one of them (the human). The only possible fourth view is "to *deny that which all three presuppose*, namely, that Christ is *composed of* two natures, and to assert that Christ is in duabus but not ex duabus naturis."[54] As we have seen, Schelling holds that the subjectum incarnationis was neither God nor man, but the Logos as a mediating third, an extra-divine divine personality, a natura sui generis who "in the act of incarnation posits himself at the same time as divine and human." Schelling states the point a number of ways; for example, "The Logos transformed the morphe theou into a human creature" = "the Logos made itself the stuff of an organic process" = "the extra-divine divested itself of its divinity" = "the true divine freed itself and appeared as divine (in the incarnate Christ)", etc.[55] Therefore,

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[51] p. 576 [52] pp. 576-579 [53] p. 576.

> "the act of the incarnation entails automatically that the incarnating Subject, without considering his absolute unity, nevertheless exists in two natures, and this is all one requires... The divine (nature) as such did not exist before the incarnation, but only that mediator (Mittlere) existed then who is spoken of as neither unconditionally God nor as human. In the Incarnation, Christ is God and man at the same time and in one Person, just as before the Incarnation he was God and the extra-divine in one Person, in which, however, the divine was covered over by the extra-divine."[56]

> "The divine does not posit itself as the human (this would be a contradiction), but the One Subject...when it, as extra-divine divine, makes itself man, at the same time posits itself as divine."[57]

The divine in Jesus does not endanger the human in him, for how can the deity which appears and becomes manifest in Christ cancel the very condition of its appearance, namely, humanity? Remember that the Logos was deprived of pure deity (entgottet) when he became the extra-divine, merely cosmic potency, not when he made himself man! In being changed (conversio) completely into man, this Subject wins again "its unity with the Father and thus its own deity." In this sense Christ is "eternal man".[58]

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[54] p. 577 [55] pp. 564, 577f., etc. [56] pp.577f [57] p. 578

d. The miracles of Jesus[59]

Christ's miracles are such "only in relation to the common order of things. In the higher order to which Christ belongs they are merely natural." Schelling does not wish to hold (a) that the world is a (Newtonian) machine with God outside it (for then miracles would necessarily appear to be a petty interference), or (b) that God is in the world only as blind substance, or (c) that God is in the world with his Will (for this seems to be denied by all "the division, confusion, error, sickness and evil in the world"). Hence (d) God must be "in the world with his Unwill, and present only potentially with his Will." Herein is given the possibility of miracle. If God is in the world at any point with his Will, then "the crooked must be made straight, the sick whole, the wrong set right." Christ's miracles - mostly healings - are like this, and are wrought by the power of the divine Will.[60]

The power of Paganism can, perhaps, be recognized in some miracles. Why, for example, did Christ choose to reveal his sovereignty during that "minor crisis" in Cana of Galilee? Schelling suggests that "in the course of his life Christ again became aware of himself *as* the potency of Paganism." Consider the change from "I am sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" to "Go into *all* the world, teach and baptize *all peoples*." This represents an "immense step for one who was Jewish born." And notice that "he who provided wine in Cana and who, in another place, supplied bread for five thousand men, was honored by Pagans, without them knowing him in his truth, as the friendly and benevolent giver of wine and *brodfrüchte*." The miracles are signs.[61]

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[58] p. 579 [59] pp. 580-582 [60] p. 580

e. The demiurgic activity of the Incarnate Christ[62]

It may help our understanding of miracles to recall that after the Fall God was no longer in the world with his Will or Personality - "except for his personal guidance of the Israelites." In "the totality and vastness of the world-all", God is present only with his Nature not his Will. He has turned his face from the world. The second person also ceases to have any *personal* relation to the universe, operating there as a demiurgic potency in a natural or will-less way. His personality has withdrawn and is "occupied with very different things - personally he is just Son of Man." Now a natural question arises as to whether the Logos continues his demiurgic activity as the incarnate one? If so, such omnipotent activity must preclude the real

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[61] pp. 581f Schelling adds in a marginal note (p. 588) that "the true explanation of miracles is in the New Testament itself, e.g., Mt 14:2, Mk. 6:14. They are effected not materially but with the *dunameis*. Cf. I Cor. 12:10."

[62] pp. 582-584

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humanity of Christ. And yet, how can he have given it up?

> "Neither has the demiurgic activity ceased because the Subject of the same became man, nor does the Subject have this omnipotence in the humanity, i.e., as man (for this is impossible), since it belongs not to the manner of being but to the Subject itself."
>
> "...With respect to the One who became man, the demiurgic activity is an act of his nature, an actus irreflexus; not an act of his will but an act which he exercises without his will, hence one which is not affected by his willing to become man and for that reason not negated."[63]

The humanity of Christ, therefore, is not related to the demiurgic activity any more than the weight of a piece of metal is related to or affected by the form in which it is cast. Natural acts are neither initiated nor cancelled by acts of will. So, "if God is somewhere in Nature with his Will, we say this is a miracle. Therefore, where a miracle is to happen, Christ says:'you will see the glory (Herrlichkeit) of God.'" But the miracles also reveal the glory of the Son:

> "The prior condition for the Son to work again demiurgically with his Will, is that the Father be again in Nature with his Will. Hence the glorification of the Son in the miracles depends on the Father, as Christ consistently recognized."[64]

C. The Death of Christ

Schelling now moves directly to "the last and greatest act" of Christ's life: "the death freely accepted for the human race." Christ's death was not accidental but pre-decided. It was "a sacrifice which the divine mind of

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[63] pp. 583, 584 [64] p. 584

Christ imposed upon his humanity," and which God the Father "required, accepted and approved."[65]

a. The significance of the Death of Christ[66]

How are we to understand the death of Christ? What, for example, might have been its causes on God's side?

As we have learned, the opposing principle had to be overcome in its root or potency if man was to be inwardly reconciled to God - and God himself willed this. But in God's eyes, "the mediating principle, so far as it is a merely natural potency, is not worth more" than the principle which separates us from God. God is the God of both principles equally, so both must be negated - demonstrating the impartiality of God's justice.[67]

> "He is the All-One, and it is his nature to be the All-One. He cannot negate this nature; it is above all will. God is therefore just toward that principle even though it estranged mankind and the world from him. His justice is his absolute impartiality, which is simply the expression of his sublime All-Oneness (All-Einheit)...Hence this divine majesty (this All-Oneness) does not permit only one principle to be broken and negated in its power. It is, one could say, God's highest law to preserve that Contrarium, for it is, in its ground, that in which he rises (when it is finally conquered) to the most powerful affirmation of his deity and sovereignty. He who knows this law has the key to what is enigmatical in the order of the world.[68]

So the second potency - whose nature and therefore sole will it is to overcome the opposing principle inwardly - "had to go first with its example", showing it knew how to negate itself not only by becoming man but by tasting death.

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[65] p. 585 [66] pp. 585-589 [67] p. 586 [68] p. 587

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> "Immediately after the Fall, the Son of Man had taken on *himself* the divine Unwill, and placed himself *between* this Unwill and the being which had defected from God - the being which the Unwill could otherwise only destroy... But when *he* himself entered into a relation with the being estranged from God, he placed himself on the side of the enemies of God. (He did *not* will to be in that situation, but he *did* will to stay there)... When he interceded for us against God, put himself in our place, he took *our guilt* upon himself and therefore also bore the *liability*, the consequence, the punishment of that guilt. He who knew no guilt has made himself the guilty one because of his love..."

> "So then, it is literally true that *He* died in our stead, paid the ransom for us (Mk.10:45, Mt. 20:28, I Peter 1:18f), for us his enemies, the enemies of his original deity, since man had set him out of his deity, i.e., out of his unity with the Father. He has redeemed our lives with his life, and freed us from the power of the Principle whose prisoners we were and which could be negated in its potency, its power, only by such an extraordinary deed. Only by such a miracle of love could it be...completely enfeebled and *inwardly* overcome. We speak of a love far greater than that love which moved the Creator to create, a miracle of which we can only say: in truth, it is so - something we could never have *expected* or foreseen according to *any* human concepts, indeed, something we would not dare to believe if it had not actually happened."[69]

With the Cross of Christ, so to speak, "the whole human race was gathered together, Pagan and Jew." The Pagans were only "the instrument", the Jews were "the instigators and agents", of his death. "The former had only the power, but the latter had the *will*."[70]

> "He was obedient not merely unto death, but unto violent death even death on the Cross, the most grievous and ignominious of all deaths, unknown among the Jews, and introduced among them by the Romans. The principle of Paganism must die the death of the pagan. At the same time, there is in the crucifixion itself something meaningful and

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[69] pp.588f (repeating and elaborating p. 471) [70] pp 589f

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> symbolic. The stretching out on the cross is only the last external appearance of the long tension in which he was posited through the whole earlier time."[71]

b. Presuppositions of the Doctrine of Reconciliation[72]

There have always been those who felt that there was no objective necessity for the death of Christ, no independent cosmic Principle (opposing the reconciliation, the union of humanity with God) that needed to be overcome. Indeed, Schelling finds it understandable that the expiatory death of Jesus should be "a scandal to obdurate and narrow moralists" (the Jews), "a foolishness to merely natural thinkers" (the Pagans), and unnecessary to those philosophies which "recognize in the world no principle akin to God or deriving from God or belonging to the life of God."[73]

True, Christ's sacrifice would have been unnecessary had there been no principle opposing reconciliation, for then "the Loving Father, so to speak, could reprieve the languishing creation directly and simply out of love." In fact, since Kant, certain theologians have held that the only relation between God and man (conceived as an ethical being) is a moral one, hence God can forgive us directly, and the death of Christ must serve only the pedagogical purpose of establishing in us "the wholesome conviction of the sanctity of the Law." But such thinkers seem to ignore the fact that the death of Christ is an outrageous violation of the Law, for the Law says: "the guilty shall suffer for himself and not one culprit for another, much less the guiltless for the guilty."[74]

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[71] p.590 [72] pp. 589-597 [73] pp. 590f [74] pp. 591f

But no text-twisting can change the "most distinctive affirmation of the New Testament", namely, "that Christ suffered not merely for us - for our good - but in our stead." Nor was the suffering just for form's sake, as, for example, in the past, "a young prince would have a playmate (kept for him for this purpose) who had to suffer the corporeal punishment which the prince had deserved, only in order that the latter might see the seriousness of the matter."[75]

The reconciliation through Christ is intelligible only on the basis of certain general presuppositions, viz., that "God himself is a nature, a life"; that he is related to man not merely in an ideal way, as Law-giver, but in a real way; that he is "vulnerable', and that man's transgression alters something not only in man but "in the objective principle of the being and existence posited by God."[76]

In addition, certain specific presuppositions are needed if we are to understand the necessity for Christ's submission not just to incarnation but to death in effecting the reconciliation. We can put the matter as follows:[77] The divine Unwill, to which the mediating potency subjected itself, "was the cause of his death." Furthermore, the subjection had to be "unto death" else it would have been incomplete. Since it was complete, the whole of the principle of the divine Unwill was broken, for "that principle is the divine Unwill only in and to the extent that it excludes the mediating potency." But when the mediating potency gives up all tension against it, "this exclusion is made impossible for that principle, hence it is robbed of its power and negated as principle of that Unwill." As Hebrews 2:14 puts it, Christ partook of flesh and blood that "through death he might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil."[78] Now man, "who had fallen completely into the power of that principle of the divine Unwill," could again be reconciled with God - not "directly or through himself, of course, but in the power of Christ, inasmuch as he 'put on Christ' (Gal.3:27, Rom. 13:14)".[79]

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[75] pp. 592, 593 [76] p. 594 [77] pp. 594-597

The meaning, the real purpose of Christ's death is now clear: It gained for men the possibility, the power, the freedom, "to become children of God, i.e., to restore the divine life in themselves." (John 1:12)

> "Thus, what man could not do for himself, and what Christ was under no necessity to do for himself (he could have preserved that principle of the Unwill, had he not willed to restore in humanity the lost glory of God), this Christ has done in man's stead and therefore 'for him'. Christ steps over from God to the place of man, covers him over, clothes him, so to speak, so that the Father sees in man no longer man himself but Christ the Son."[80]

c. The Nature of Death and the Death of Christ[81]

What change took place in Christ's person at his death? It might seem that, since Christ existed as fully man, he "died a death no different from that which every man dies." But this is just our problem! What happens to man at death?

In the end, Schelling believes, there are "only two possible views concerning the nature of death. It is either (a) a separation (of body and soul) or (b) an essentification (in which man's essence is preserved).

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[78] pp. 594f [79] pp. 596f [80] p. 597 [81] pp. 598-600

> "The common view which sees death as a separation of soul and body, considers the body as a specimen of ore in which the soul is enclosed and hidden like some noble metal. Death is the separation process which frees the soul from this matter which encloses and surrounds it and presents it in its purity. The other view would be inclined rather to compare the effect of death to that process in which the spirit (Geist) or essence (Essenz) of a plant is extracted. It is thought that all power and all life which the plant had in itself passes over into the sap which is drawn from a plant..."
>
> "So the death of man might be not so much a separation as an essentification, in which only the accidental comes to an end, but the essence, what man really is, is preserved. For no man appears in his life as he really is; but after death he does. Therein lies the joyfulness of death for some, and its appalling terror for others. Both the accidental evil which here conceals the good, and the accidental good which here cloaks the evil, disappear."[82]

The separation view suggests to Schelling that only part of man continues after death, not man in his whole esse, whereas the essentification theory suggests that "the whole man persists, only spiritualized, essentified." Schelling prefers the latter view, for if there is to be "identity of consciousness in this life and the next," we must assume that one and the same man "appears in one kind of being during the present life, and continues on in another kind of being after death" - always one and the same man in his wholeness.[83]

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[82] p. 599. Schelling expressed this "essentification" idea as early as 1811, in a letter of condolence to his friend, President Georgii in Stuttgart. See footnote by D.H., p. 599.

[83] pp. 598, 600

In the case of Jesus, then, "the same subject which is dead as visible man... lives after death as spirit."[84] Schelling appeals to I Peter 3:18-20, which reads:

> "For Christ also died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit; in which he went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which... a few were saved."

d. The Descent of Christ

The above passage has given rise to the doctrine of the descent of Christ ad inferos. Schelling understands the spirits "in prison" to be those who perished in the Flood,[85] i.e., those who did not want to enter into a relation to the second potency and were therefore cut off from both Revelation and Mythology. They lived only in the first Principle and had never known a Deliverer; but now Christ preaches to them. They had been preserved in an intermediate state (Zwischenzustande) for future possible faith.

Furthermore, Old Testament passages indicate "that the condition of the deceased was not the same in every age; and herein rules a divine economy. Even in the spirit world, an Old and a New Testament must be distinguished." The Old Testament dead "could be illumined and blessed" by the expectation of future redemption."[86]

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[84] p. 600. Cf. p. 617: "He was in death Superstes anima (a surviving soul) as a man, wanting nothing but to be raised and glorified in human form..."

[85] p. 600f. Cf. p. 696. On the significance of the Flood, v. Part I above.

[86] p. 601

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D. The Resurrection and Exaltation of Christ

a. The three Stages of all Human Life[87]

Characteristically, Schelling conceives human life in its wholeness or totality (Gesammtleben) as made up of three stages. These apply in general to the life of mankind as a whole, and in particular to each individual man.

> "To each succession three-ness belongs: (a) a wrong state, (b) negation of the wrong, (c) attainment of the right... (Hence) after man has separated life in itself from life in God he can arrive at the unity destined for him only in three stages."[88]

The first stage, the present life of man (which means, for the individual, the period from conception to death), is that of "a one-sidedly natural life", "a life of the freest movement". The second stage "must be that of a one-sidedly spiritual life", a life of "immobility" where "the power-to-be ceases" and "that which must be" reigns. The third stage is that of "a spiritual-natural life" where "the natural is raised into the spiritual", and "the spiritual is liberated again to the most free mobility". "This third moment is what is taught as a future general resurrection of the dead, and indeed, as a resurrection of the flesh."[89]

> "The present life of man is only his natural life, hence it is not his whole life... I do not say that the spiritual is not there at all in the present life (that would be a complete separation),... but the natural life is the dominating, ruling one. (Subjectively, the spirit already predominates here... objectively, it is subject to nature - changing from sleep to wakefulness, needing food and drink.) It is a co-existence, but the reverse of that which should be. The natural should be the latent, the

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[87] pp. 601-609 [88] pp. 603, 602 [89] p. 602. Cf. pp. 606f

> hidden, the spiritual should be manifest. Now it is reversed: the natural is the revealed, the spiritual is the hidden..."[90]

If the second state is to be posited, "the preceding one must be negated, i.e., man must die in his natural life." Hence, far from death being an objection against immortality, "it is itself a necessary element of continuance."[91]

Everyone dies, of course, but since Christianity sees death as a punishment for guilt doesn't this mean that everyone suffers, just and unjust? True, agrees Schelling, but "the suffering of each is very different." Those who live as spiritually as possible now, shall experience the next life as pleasant, "a rest in the Lord," while those who here "immerse themselves lustfully in the material life" will be tormented in the next by their incapacity to participate.[92]

The "old metaphysics" knew that it had to prove not merely the soul's survival of death (which may be quite short-lived) but the immortality of the soul, i.e., its necessary continuance by virtue of its nature. Hence, it tried to prove the soul's immortality (=indestructibility) by declaring it to be a unitary thing, not something composite (as corporeal bodies are). The soul, however, is "not something simple in the merely negative sense, but a whole of functions and activities which belong together." As such, it can disintegrate, grow weaker, decay ("as happens with increasing age"). Also, if the soul is only the incorporeal, animating principle of the body, it could, with the destruction of the body, lose all its individual characteristics and "return into its universality."[93] Man's immortality must be differently conceived.

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[90] pp. 603f   [91] p. 605   [92] p. 606

> "The immortality of the human essence (Wesen) rests on an indissolubility, but an indissolubility of the three moments: (a) natural, (b) spiritual, (c) natural-spiritual life. These are presented so indissolubly united that man, so soon as the first of these states is posited, shall necessarily live the second and the third, and since he cannot live them simultaneously, he passes through them successively."[94]

b. The Resurrection of Christ[95]

Applying this speculation to Christ, Schelling can now regard the resurrection of Christ as the third stage in his eternal humanity.

> "The human life of Christ therefore becomes completely-human only if it goes through these three moments: (1) appearance in the flesh, (2) tarrying in the spirit-world, (3) return to the visible world in glorified human corporeality. Of the three days that are reckoned from the death of Christ till his resurrection, the first, for the most part, still belonged to his life in this world; the middle day brought him completely into the spirit-world; and the third was the day of his resurrection. The resurrection of Christ was the decisive proof of the irreversibility of his incarnation, and that he reserved to himself nothing but the divine mind (Gesinnung), the divine will. By the voluntary persistence in humanity even in (after) death..., the Son induced the Father to accept again the human being in him, and therewith human being in general. The re-acceptance took place precisely in the resurrection of Christ, or rather, the resurrection of Christ was nothing but the activity of this complete re-acceptance. Hence it is said: Christ died for our sins and for our justification was raised again (Rom. 4:25, Cf. 5:5ff), i.e., as proof that human nature is again perfectly acceptable and just to God."[96]

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[93] pp. 608f [94] p. 609 [95] pp. 609-611 [96] p. 609

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The result of the resurrection, for us, was justification, acceptance by God. Hence the Christian life is one of peace and joy, far from "the melancholy, self-torturing thing that a misunderstanding of what Christ did for us can impose." Justification cannot come through works.

> "Since not our individual actions but our whole existence is reprehensible in God's eyes, it follows that our works cannot justify us... Since man is conscious that he is displeasing before God in all his willing and action, this leads to that despair of the soul (desponsio animi), that unbelief, in which he feels it is all the same whatever he does... because nothing can justify him before God... There is the utmost anguish (Angst) in the face of evil, but there is no courage toward the good without presupposing justification. Only when the whole present state is justified can there be individual good works."[97]

In becoming man, Christ was linked with the Holy Spirit, but in death (the complete sacrifice of his selfhood) "the Holy Spirit becomes the spirit of Christ himself." It is now the Spirit who "raises the incarnate one from the dead, hence Christ in in the power of the Holy Spirit both as dead and as resurrected." (Rom. 8:11, 1:4; Hebr. 9:14). After the resurrection, "the man Christ for himself alone is equal to the whole deity. At the same time there is restored in him in a more glorious way the original man" (who lost the glory of God through the Fall). Hence, through Christ, the glory is also restored to man, and "that very re-acceptance of human nature in Christ mediates the future re-acceptance of the same in the general resurrection." "If we die in him we shall also live in him." but those who are not "dead in him" (not truly in him) have eternal death.[98]

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[97] p. 610 [98] p. 611. (Cf. Rom. 6:5, 8; 14:11; 2 Tim. 2:11; Rev. 14:13).

c. Historical Signficance of the Fact of the Resurrection

The Resurrection, says Schelling, is one of those "Lightning flashes" in which the higher or inner history breaks into merely "external history" and illuminates the bare facts of human events as moments in the divine history of the universe.

> "The resurrection of Christ is the decisive fact of this whole higher history, a history which is not comprehensible, of course, from the common standpoint. Facts like the resurrection of Christ are like lightning flashes in which the higher, i.e., the true, the inner history breaks into (and enters) the merely external history. To remove these facts is to change history into a mere externality. That which provides history's support, its value and its only meaning, is removed the moment these facts are taken away. And how bleak, empty and dead, how stripped of all divine content history appears when it is robbed of its connection with that inner, divine, transcendental history which, strictly speaking, is the true history, history κατ' ἐξοχήν ...
>
> Not to dissolve external history in that higher history, but to preserve its connection with the latter, must be one of the activities of a Philosophy of Revelation. Such facts, by which the inner history emerges externally, are but few in number, but no thoughtful person will regard this as sufficient reason to doubt them, for that would mean he was unable to recognize the inner and higher connection of things in general; and the meaning of history would then be that everything is related merely externally and blindly - a meaning which will be allowed him, of course, but which no one can envy him."[99]

d. From Resurrection to Exaltation[100]

As to the real state of Christ, the actual nature of his body, between the Resurrection and the Ascension, Schelling's comments are restrained:

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[99] pp. 611f

[100] pp.612-619

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> "If, for example, we were to say something about the nature of the body of Christ, transfigured and glorified in the resurrection (i.e., subject to no further dissolution) we would be reaching out beyond our experience. Philippians 3:21 says that Christ will one day 'change our lowly body to be like his glorious body.' Hence we must ask first wherein consists the future glorification of our bodies... What is past is known; what is future is believed. But this much is certain: once an external, extra-divine world is accepted and approved in Christ, the final purpose (the original purpose which cannot be negated)... can only be that the whole inner world, as it was originally supposed to be, should be presented externally, visibly, in the outer world, so that man, who inwardly is pure spiritual essence, should become outwardly a pure spiritual essence... Also, for this hope we are indebted to Christ - to expect after the last crisis of the world (the Last Judgment) a new heaven and a new earth."[101]

Really to explain the nature of Christ's Ascension, says Schelling, would require a thorough examination of the nature of Space ("so-called infinite Space"). But here he avoids the challenge, although it should be noted, perhaps, that on page 627f he does pre-suppose the Copernican system.[102]

According to Philippians 2: 6-8, it was because of Christ's obedience unto death that God highly exalted him, giving him the name above every name. The traditional theory, in holding that Christ's humiliation consisted precisely in his "non-use of the divine attributes," might now say that in Christ's exaltation God is again permitting him the free use of those attributes. But, Schelling objects, "the pure and naked deity of Christ (simplex et nuda deitas)" is incapable of either humiliation or exaltation. The Subject of the exaltation is that same special Personality who experienced incarnation and endured death, the one "who can be called neither God nor man." The exaltation is the Father's recognition of him as "Lord, as Son of God in power, as heir of God, i.e., the one to whom he transfers all being."[103]

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[101] p. 614 [102] Cf. Lecture 18 of the Philosophical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology.

> "This is the reward of Christ, that he now has a right to be outside God in his own form; that is, now he is not without (ohne) the divine will, but he is with the will of God outside (ausser) him, and is clothed with all glory in this being-outside-God. This deity, which he has as a special person, is the result of his voluntary humiliation..."

> "Christ is outside God through his eternal humanity; he is outside man and independent of man through his deity. 'God has made him Lord' could not be said of him who was not God (theos) in the beginning... nor of him who was never other than contained in God and absorbed in the divine life. But it could well be said of him who was posited outside of the deity, and who [instead of choosing independence] humbled himself and submitted himself to God. This one could be raised to that Lordship and glory which he did not want to arrogate to himself or seize covetously."[104]

The "perfectly literal meaning" of the New Testament supports this view, says Schelling. The resurrected Christ is distinguished from the Father (e.g., I Cor. 8:6), he is made Lord by God (Acts 2:36), and his authority and glory are given to him (Mt. 28:18).[105]

> "Whoever recognizes Christ in his substance, as special Personality, and at the same time as the one to whom is given all power, has the true Christ, Christ as he is; and such a one is at the standpoint of the present being and life of mankind. So when, as the Apostle says, God in Christ has reconciled the world to Himself in Christ, that highest relation of mediation is attained - the relation which was there already in the Creation, but only in thought. The secret of creation itself is presented in Christ so that every man can grasp and understand it as immediate truth and reality. One more thing:.....the present

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[103] pp. 614-616 [104] pp. 616, 617 [105] pp. 616-619, where these and other supporting passages are discussed, e.g., Lk. 24:26, Hebrews 2:10.

> sovereignty of Christ has, to be sure, overcome that negation, that divestment of sovereignty, in which he was placed by the guilt of man. But since this (perfect) sovereignty of Christ is still hidden, there will be a final, manifest and universal glorification of Christ still in the future."[106]

e. A Concise Summary

Of Schelling's numerous recapitulations, the following is perhaps the most clear, concise and complete:

> "By now, what was said at the beginning and often repeated, should be clear to all, namely, that Christianity is not a doctrine (Lehre) but a Subject (Sache). The real content of Christianity is Christ himself and his history, not the merely external history of his deeds and suffering during the period of his visible humanity, but the higher (history) in which his life as man is only a transition and therefore only a moment. The immediate object of the explanation is, of course, Christ in his historical manifestation. But this historical appearance is itself explicable only in terms of a context which stretches beyond it, one which extends on the one side back to the beginning of things and on the other forward to the final End-time. Nevertheless, the content of Christianity is not so-called universal religion. Its content is the special personality who, since the beginning of the present order of things, was outside God, but for that very reason was an independent personality. And yet this personality did not use this independence for his own advantage, but only for a voluntary subjection and sacrifice of itself, in order to change the divine Unwill into gracious goodwill once again. Christ thereby acquired extra-divine Lordship, recognized and willed by God himself, as heir of the Father. The Father handed over all things to him, for him to rule over them until that period, seen by the Apostle Paul in the farthest future of times, when, after overcoming all his enemies, all who strive against God, he gives back the Kingdom (the being ruled till now) to the Father, without losing his personality or his lordship over being. For because the Father has it only as something posited again in him by the Son, it is, in the Father, both the being of the Son and of the Father. And precisely with this last moment is posited the perfect community of the being between the Father and the Son and the Spirit - for the Spirit finally contains everything under itself and is, in this sense, also ruling."[107]

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[106] p. 619

[107] pp. 620f; begins Lecture 33.

f. The Continuing work of Christ[108]

The work of Christ is "a continuing one, reaching out into the most distant future," for "everything is not yet subject to Christ", and we ourselves are not yet what we shall be. By "putting on Christ" we have received only the "freedom, power and possibility" to be children of God, to have the divine life restored in us, and to put on the Spirit. This is the first work of Christ. He had to go away so that "the last and highest mediator", the ἄλλος παράκλητος (Jn 16:7, 14:16) could come. "Only when this happens is the whole deity (Gottheit) actualized in us."[109]

Thus Christ mediates the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, makes possible the next moment in the history of God, brings to an end the whole cosmic religion, and inaugurates the religion of the spirit and of freedom.

> "Here is revealed the universal law of progress which guides us in our long investigation: what is earlier must go, i.e., must make room in order that what follows might come. Hence, since man, up till Christ's appearance, is ruled exclusively by the real principle on the one hand, and by the second potency on the other - the second potency is also cosmic or posited outside God and in this sense merely natural - then the death of Christ and, since this was only the result of the incarnation, the incarnation of Christ, was only the going of that mediating potency which condescended to become man just in order, by its death, to negate itself as a natural potency and therewith to end all tension. But in this way it made room for the third potency which, after the negation of all tension, is no longer a cosmic potency but the Holy Spirit.... Here appears in its last and highest form that divine economy which is based on the succession of personalities. Each succeeding person explains and glorifies the words of the preceding..."[110]

When Schelling says "in Christ the whole cosmic religion dies", he means its power is broken. The cosmic powers - "an immense number of them was posited by the tension" - do no cease to exist. Christ has simply taken from them their "necessary and invincible power." "Whatever powers might set themselves up after Christ's time are subject to him." Only when Christ finally hands the Kingdom over to the Father shall all extra-divine powers completely cease to be. (Col. 2:15, Eph. 2:21, 3:9, 3:20f) Meanwhile these powers can make themselves felt at any point or in any moment of consciousness, and it remains possible for man in his freedom to subject himself again to their influence and yoke.[111]

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[108] pp. 628-632 [109] p. 628 [110] pp. 628f

The next chapter will therefore offer a discussion of these cosmic powers, of the primal anti-divine power, and of the whole world of spirits.

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[111] pp. 630f. Heaven is defined as "the region of the free, universal potencies, liberated from the concrete" (p.630) (Eph. 3:10).

CHAPTER FOUR

SATAN AND THE WORLD OF SPIRITS

Schelling now begins an intriguing discussion of the nature of evil and of Satanology, Demonology and Angelology.[1] The discussion is prompted by the desire to understand Christianity's relationship to the principle of Paganism, for Christianity sees itself as "salvation from the blind power of Paganism". How, then, does Christianity view that blind power?

A. Satanology

Satan, according to the orthodox explanation of mythology, is "the prince of darkness" and the Head of all evil, especially Paganism. Furthermore, the New Testament describes Satan as the special enemy of Christ and ascribes to him an important role. Schelling therefore feels compelled carefully to investigate the significance of this great power.

a. Critique of Conventional Ideas of Satan

The old, conventional Christian view of the origin of Paganism and the birth of Mythology held "that the human race, through the prompting of Satan, drew away from the true God, was filled with representations of false gods, and was led or forced to serve what were by nature not gods at all."[2]

Schelling agrees with this theory inasmuch as it regards Mythology not as human invention or accidental error but as the product of a real power, a power "independent of

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[1] The discussion comprises the last half of Lecture 33 plus Lectures 34 and 35, i.e., W, VI, 633-685

[2] p. 633

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the freedom of man, indeed, one which captures this very freedom."[3] But he disagrees with its understanding of Satan as "an individual, created Spirit, powerful but by no means unlimited, an originally good angel who arrogantly attempted to rise above God and oppose him; thrown out by God and abandoned to his own perversity; and now, as renegades are wont to do, exerting himself to the utmost in order to draw others away from God, especially mankind, and make them independent of him."[4] Schelling disagrees with this view not because he wants to dispute Satan's reality or detract from his dignity, but because, on the contrary, he wishes to "ascribe to Satan an even higher reality and significance". The conventional view will appear "inadequate and petty" beside the true one.[5]

First, Schelling points out that "Satan" is a general term. In Hebrew, it simply means adversary (Widersacher) in general. "With the article, of course, it means a definite adversary (Hebrew: הַשָּׂטָן), the adversary par excellence." This latter suggests a "personality" or "spirit", but not necessarily "an individually created spirit who in his own way is endless." הַשָּׂטָן is "quite correctly translated by the Greek ὁ ἀντικείμενος." Furthermore, in Hebrew, Satan is used quite generally to mean "aufhalten", i.e., to oppose a movement or put obstacles in its way. The Hebrew substantive became διάβολος in Greek (German: Teufel), "from

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[3] p. 634 [4] p. 634 [5] p. 635

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διαβάλλειν which simply means: *interjicere se ad obsistentum*." "Originally the Greek word was used quite generally and even abstractly of any *contrario*, of anything by which somebody is deceived or led astray."[6]

b. Satan is neither a Creature nor an Eternal Principle of Evil[7]

Nowhere, insists Schelling, does the Bible say the Devil was *created*. To say that he "becomes" only in the course of events is not inconsistent with saying he was uncreated. The view that Satan is "a created Spirit" seems to rest on the general assumption that "everything that is *actually* outside God must be a creature, a being created by God."[8] But Christ was "*outside* God without being a creature" when he was in that "middle state" earlier described by Schelling. Why could not Satan, Christ's special enemy, be similarly outside God yet not a mere creature?

> "If Christ in that conflict is not a *creature*, should the one who is opposed to him be a creature? Or should he not rather be something outside and above the creaturely? For only then would it be a true *power* on whose account it would be worth the effort to do and to suffer such great and extraordinary things as Christ did and suffered. Clearly we must have a more worthy opponent for Christ. Christ and Satan are so related to one another that the *Bogomilen* even call Satan the older brother of Christ."[9]

Biblically and philosophically, Schelling believes, there is no necessity to think of Satan as a creature. But Biblical thought is also opposed to any suggestion that Satan is an *eternal evil principle*.

> "An evil principle would be one which is evil by nature, one which is opposed to God by nature, i.e., originally. Such a thing was assumed by the Manicheans and, at

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[6] pp. 635f
[7] pp. 636-639
[8] p. 636
[9] p. 637

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> least according to the usual view, was also affirmed in the Persian system. An evil *principle* would be a principle which is *eternal* like God (*Deo coaeternum*). Now both Old and New Testaments most decisively oppose this."[10]

The true understanding of Satan shall therefore lie "in the middle between these two definitions", but before proceeding with the positive part of his inquiry, Schelling refers to certain scriptural passages which support the above two points, namely, that Satan can be *neither* a creature *nor* an eternal principle of evil.

In Revelations 12:7, for example, Satan is said to rule a Kingdom just as Christ rules a Kingdom. In this sense, he is placed "on the same level as Christ", but as the Adversary, of course, "whose Kingdom and whose works are come to destroy Christ". Now "if the power of Satan were a creaturely power, there is *no* reason... for Christ, a decidedly supra-creaturely nature, to subject himself to suffering in order to conquer it. Surely there are other ways of going against a merely *created* spirit." Furthermore, the orthodox view of Satan as a presumptuous, rebellious and fallen spirit, is quite out of harmony with the dignity and majesty (*Erhabenheit*) of Satan in this passage. It is also out of harmony with 2 Cor. 4:4, where Satan is called the *God* of this world (ὁ θεός τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου), and with Hebrews 2:14, where Satan is said to have the power of death (τὸ κράτος τοῦ θανάτου ἔχειν). Such things cannot be said of a mere creature, an individual and concrete spirit - although they could be said of that principle Schelling has called B.[11]

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[10] p. 637. Cf. p. 666

> "If, for example, Satan is understood to be that Will which was again aroused in the creation by the guilt of man; and which, in its being overcome and made subject to a higher will, is the foundation of creation and of human consciousness; but which, for that very reason, when it emerges anew in its limitlessness, threatens to destroy human consciousness -- if by Satan we are to understand this Will of whose existence, most real activity, and power over human consciousness we have had sufficient occasion to persuade ourselves throughout this whole investigation ... if by Satan we are to understand this Will - but every will = spirit, hence, this Spirit - then that expression ('he has the power of death') is not too strong, but is perfectly appropriate to the Subject."[12]

c. Satan is a Principle in the Divine Economy[13]

In many New Testament passages Satan is described as "author of evil and therefore enemy of God", but he also appears in some passages as "a principle which belongs to the divine economy itself." Schelling begins to present this positive view of Satan by recounting the conversation in the prolog to the Book of Job. Here, he claims, Satan is presented not as himself evil but as "an instrument of God himself insofar as God wills that nothing remain hidden."

> "Now how does Satan appear here (in Job)? As a power whose inclination is to put man's basic character (Gesinnung) in question and hence to put it to the test. In other words, he appears as a power which is necessary, so to speak, if the uncertain is to become certain, the undecided decided, and character proved genuine. Here you see how far back the idea of Satan goes, right back to the first beginnings, for he is the power which, without himself being evil, nevertheless brings forth to the light of day the hidden evil in order that it not remain hidden under the good. Satan is gladdened by the sight of evil brought forth or

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[11] p.638 [12] pp. 638f [13] pp. 639-643 Cf. p. 653

> brought out into the open because it represents confirmation of his doubt and because, by its becoming revealed, his purpose is achieved. This power can even be called jealous, just as Aristotle said of Nemesis that it is displeased with, i.e., jealous of, the undeservedly lucky ones. All those sinister beings which in Hesiod are born from noisome night - Thanatos (Death), Momos (the universal Fault-finder - indeed, Satan is represented as such here in the book of Job), Contention, and especially Ate, goddess of ruin, who is conceived as authoress of all precipitate transactions and the evil arising therefrom - all these sinister essences seem to come together in the idea of Satan and assign him a high place and function in the Creation without him himself really being a creature."[14]

As in this encounter with Job, so in the seduction of the first man (Adam), Satan's role is to raise doubts about motives and put inner attitudes to the test. He is not himself evil even though, in confronting the primeval parents, "he anticipates evil and delights in drawing it forth."[15]

It seems clear to Schelling, therefore, that the "original idea of Satan is completely different from what the later period has made of him." "Toward the end of the struggle, Satan is always experienced as himself evil." But this is natural and understandable, for "he is an historical being, different at different times."[16]

> "The personalities in that higher history with which we are here concerned are not static or unmoving, and therefore their concept is itself a fluid one. So with Satan - the author of contradiction, the universal dis-uniter, by whom death, discord and evil itself first entered the world - Satan is one thing in his beginning and another in his end. Yet I must say that the end always reminds one of the beginning, just as the

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[14] p. 640f. Cf. p. 652 [15] p. 641, 653 [16] p. 641

> last book of the New Testament recalls once again that representation of Satan as the one who casts suspicion, the one who places in doubt, the Accuser (Rev. 12:9... 'the accuser of our brethren has been cast down, who accuses them day and night before God')." ... (This is consistent with what on occasion I said earlier about justification. There is something in man which always says to him that his whole life is displeasing in God's sight. What he does accuses him constantly before God.) Whoever accuses another in the presence of a third, seeks to separate him from this third. Satan is the one who constantly seeks to separate man from God. That aroused Principle is, so to speak, the continual accuser (Ankläger) of man with God. Unceasingly he reminds God of the guilt of man.[17]
>
> "But in that time of which the Apocalypse speaks, this principle is broken through by Christ and destroyed. The Kingdom of God and Christ begins. The share which hitherto the Accuser had in the state of the world and of things is taken from him. The world is purely God's and his anointed, i.e., God now has all power with his anointed. Hence, up until that final end when Christ shall destroy all sovereignty and power and when all his enemies are put under his feet - up till then Satan is a principle which belongs to the divine economy itself. It is his task to maintain the opposition, the curse, the dissension, the division, so that the victory and final triumph - in which is completed the plan (Sache) of God, continuously put in doubt by the spirit of contradiction - is so much the more glorious. Then, when all doubt is destroyed, and the cause (Sache) of God is clear, manifest and decisive, Satan's work is done, and his mission - and with it his power - is at an end."[18]

d. Satan serves the final purposes of God[19]

As the last paragraph points out, Satan continues, right up till the final victory of Christ's Kingdom, as a great power who is "necessary for the final glorification of God." Hence Satan is not to be slandered or despised (as II Peter 2:10 warns; Cf. Jude 8). St. Paul, to be sure, declares the Christian's "freedom from every cosmic force," but this doctrine of freedom, Schelling fears, may be "fatal to weak souls" and lead them to re-entanglement with the cosmic powers, so that "their last state is worse than their first". Even the angels do not dare to defame these "glorious ones", these majestic anti-divine powers, but leave the judgment to God. (So Schelling's interpretation of II Peter 2:11, 20 and Jude 8.)[20]

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[17] pp. 641f [18] pp. 642f [19] pp. 643-647

Thus Satan is the principle on which the glory and sovereignty of God rests, and is to be considered a kind of divine Majesty (a κυριότης). This could never be said of a mere creature or of an unconditionally evil principle, but it could be said of a principle which is necessary to the divine world-rule. Schelling observes that this is a completely Jewish idea and cites, inter alia, the Book of Sirach: "he who curses Satan is called an irreligious man; it is said that such a one curses his own soul."[21]

> "The Satan is the B posited by the divine Unwill. He is the great power of God in the fallen world, which even so high a power as Michael dare not look down on or condemn. The judgment on him is reserved to God alone, and this fully agrees with the fact that this principle is the real mystery (Mysterium) of God which he posits, and which he can annul, and which no creature may dare to call in question."[22]

Such an estimate of Satan helps us to a much better understanding of the story of Christ's Temptations. There is "a divine law that wants everything put to the test and proved." Hence, even Christ *had* to be exposed to one of equal rank and power.

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[20] pp. 643f. [21] p. 645 [22] p. 644

> "A mere creature, a creaturely spirit, which in comparison with Christ could have been no true *power*, would not have been able to get near *him* with temptations. On the other hand, it is quite understandable that the *prince* or God of this world, the *universal* principle which held all the world captive, could come close to the consciousness of Christ... If Satan is a *mere* creature, then the words are absurd when he says to Christ: All this power and sovereignty is mine, I give it to whom I will! But if Satan is a principle, one who feels that soon only the external world-kingdom will belong to him (more on this later), then these words are perfectly in order."[23]

For man, too, the real battle is not against flesh and blood, but against "the ἀρχάς, the ἐξουσίας ... the κοσμοκράτορας, the cosmic forces, the world-rulers who rule in the darkness of this age, the spiritual principles of evil whose region is not the limited earthly world but the universal world, heaven."[24] Hence Schelling sees Satan as an ever-present, constant and direct influence on man. As a universal, cosmic principle, Satan is able constantly to insinuate himself into man, indeed, he is "*in* man."

e. Satan originates in and with the Fall of Man[25]

Schelling now attempts to explain the origin and meaning of Satan in terms of his metaphysical analysis of the potencies of being, i.e., in terms of the presuppositions of the Philosophy of Revelation. As we have learned, B is

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[23] p. 646 [24] p. 647 (Cf. Eph. 6:12) [25] pp. 648-654

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the principle of the beginning which lies at the basis of the whole of Nature and of human consciousness. It is the first potency (-A) now understood as a principle of historical change, and therefore designated as B. B is not itself a creature, but that out of which all creatures come ("the ultimate hupokeimenon of the creation"). Satan, however, is not the pure or absolute B.

> "But just this B is the object to be overcome in the whole of creation - strictly speaking, an infinite being posited out of himself, out of his original limits, who is to be brought back again through the creation into the limits of potency (Könnens, Potenz) as A. Now this B posited as A - since it is neither original A nor mere B - is, as such, a creature, and indeed, the highest of all creatures, i.e., man. (I ask you to note this well: neither the original A, the pure power-to-be, nor the pure B, that out of which all things come, is to be called a creature, but only the A which is brought back out of B into A is to be so-called.)
>
> "In this moment (which, of course, can be conceived only as a moment), the B is again in its original clarity and purity, it is again = A, as before the creation (for in the creation B was different from itself, that which was posited outside itself). This moment in our development corresponds to the moment assumed in the other theory when Satan, that is, that which is Satan later on, is conceived as still pure, as not fallen, as in uncreated sovereignty. Within the human consciousness and surrounded with the limits of the same, that principle is therefore actually a creature. Man, however, has himself, by immemorial deed, again destroyed these limits. But since the principle was creaturely only within those limits, it now emerges again (as a result of man's act) from its creaturely role.
>
> "And this principle which as a result of the creation was in creaturely limits but is now again emerged from these limits, by reason of the guilt of man, this principle is now again, as itself limitless and opposed to all concrete being, pure spirit. It is itself a general, universal principle. It is a life of its own kind, a false life, to be

> sure, one which should not be but one which is anyway; and once aroused, it cannot be brought back again, at least not immediately. Of this principle, which now lives in its own limitlessness and which is become most real, we can say nothing other than: it is a spirit. It is spirit because its nature is opposed to everything concrete, but it is a spirit because it is a specific spirit, i.e., not an original spirit, of course, but one which merely became (hence not a principle in the Manichean sense). 'It is a spirit which became', i.e., a spirit which was aroused by man and comprehended originally in human consciousness, but is now a spirit which goes beyond it, indeed, which threatens to destroy it. This principle (as thought out through all these moments) is the Satan...[26]

Of Satan, therefore, it can be said: "he is a creature" (since he presupposes the creature) and "he is not a creature" (since he is now a limitless spirit).[27] Satan "becomes" only in and with the Fall of man.

A powerful objection to this theory is now considered. Did not Satan precede and cause the Fall? How then can Schelling say he originates with the Fall? To overcome this objection, Schelling distinguishes the real power of Satan from his ideal power:

> "The existence (Dasein) of Satan as such can only mean this much: his real power over man. This, of course, he attained only through the Fall. But the power and strength to lead man astray - which is not real if man does not allow it to become real - this still ideal power (so to speak) must have been attained by him in some other way than through the Fall. The matter is rather as follows: That principle of the beginning, which is the ground of creation and precedes it, was subjected to man... But though given into the power of man, this principle cannot get rid of the original ambiguity - the duplicity of its nature. In the last analysis, Satan belongs completely to the category of non-existence (nicht Seienden)... The creation, to be

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[26] 648-650 [27] p. 650

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> sure, is based on the fact that this principle emerged out of this non-being (nicht-Sein), out of the In-Itself (An-sich), and became existent. But the final meaning of the whole creation is precisely to explain it as the non-existing, and as this it is explained in man. For man arises only when that principle has become non-existing but which, for this very reason, becomes the one which posits the highest (that which really should be)... But it cannot get rid of the ambiguity of its nature. Always the possibility remains that it will again arise, emerge... Therefore, the same principle which in the sequel is recognised as enemy, as adversary, as Satan of man, exists already before the transgression as the one who occasions it, as the one who, by deception, by false magic, wins over to his side the will of man."[28]

The difference between this view and the common view, is that Satan is not seen here as a spirit who fell before the Fall of man. He tempts man not because he is evil, but because it is his nature to tempt.

> "It is its nature to be the ambiguous being and to represent itself to the human consciousness, to which it is subjected, as power to be (sein Könnendes), as possibility, which is nothing for itself, of course, and shall be actual only when the human will goes over to it - here, therefore, that principle, without being fallen, for it is its nature, is tempter and the one who leads men astray."[29]

There is a great difference, says Schelling, between thinking of the Tempter as "a mere creature who is already cast forth from heaven" before the Fall, and seeing him as "a principle which is necessary for divine revelation, even for creation itself, and in whose nature, which absolutely does not exclude, lies a doubleness" which can be conquered only by "a series of catastrophes and restoration."

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[28] pp. 650f

[29] p. 653

> "It makes a big difference whether a malicious creature, as some assume, is permitted to draw man, created innocent, with him into his corruption, or whether God permits this to a principle whose only function is to place in doubt what is dubious in itself, to bring to decision what is undecided, and in this way to precipitate a crisis which God himself must want, since he cannot will that the evil remain concealed. Precisely because of his holiness, he _must_ want evil to be revealed and not hide itself _under_ the good posited by him."

F. The Biblical View of Satan as Tempter and Deceiver[31]

Having rejected the old "fallen angel" theory, Schelling now finds Biblical support for his own understanding of Satan as the Principle which tempts man and leads him astray. As such, for example, Satan is already present as the serpent in Paradise (Gen. 3:1) and as the "ancient serpent" of Revelations 12:9.[32] Of course, this is a _mythological_ way of presenting the principle, but for Schelling this means, as we know, that the "serpent" is no product of poetic fancy but a necessary manner of appearance in consciousness. The Biblical story of the Fall presents "a purely inner process as an external one" and "contains pure, divine truth," but it has necessarily expressed itself in a mythological way.

> "(Genesis 3) has grasped most profoundly the nature of that principle which leads man astray, precisely in presenting it as a serpent (i.e., mythologically)... The whole state of human consciousness out of which this story arose at that time permitted no other kind of presentation."[33]

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[30] p. 654

[31] pp. 654-661

[32] pp. 654, 656. "The serpent in Paradise is actually that principle of non-being which, in tempting man, is _actually_ Satan... Apate (Deception) was there harmoniously _among_ the first potencies which preceded mythology." (p. 657)

[33] pp. 656, 657

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We shall include here a summary of Schelling's exegesis of three New Testament passages: Revelations 12:9, I John 3:8, and John 8:44

Revelations 12:9 says that the great Dragon, that ancient Serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, was thrown down to earth with his angels. Schelling follows Grotius who suggested that the double name refers to Paganism and Judaism; the Devil is Tempter of the Pagans and the Satan is Antagonist of the Jews. The two together, therefore, corrupted the whole earth, Jews and Gentiles. The meaning of Satan's expulsion from heaven is to be understood in the light of that victory of Christianity in which Satan lost his "religious" meaning. His being "thrown down to earth" signifies not that he lost all power, but that his power "acquires from now on an earthly meaning." "A new theatre of the activity of Satan is opened up; it is nothing less than the bloodied stage of modern history."[34]

I John 3:8 says "the Devil has sinned from the beginning", which means that for him no other movement is possible than that of sinning. "He must either not move at all, or he can only sin," i.e., deny God. For this principle, "the positing of God is not in the act but in the non-act - not insofar as it moves, but insofar as it does not move." As soon as it moved - "from the beginning" - it sinned, i.e., denied God. That principle of the beginning should "remain in the center, but it deviates from the middle point because it has from the beginning, as a result of its nature, the propensity to become active again." Hence it "sins" in the original meaning of ἁμαρτάνειν, viz., "to go astray", "to miss the mark". Not yet really, but ideally, from the beginning, this principle is not *eo loco quo esse debebat*, but an *aberratio a scopo*.[35]

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[34] pp. 655f

John 8:44 declares "Your father, the Devil... was a murderer from the beginning", i.e., "he was *by nature* the threatening principle which seeks to bring about the death of man or of the human consciousness in which alone man's life is found." "He did not abide in the truth", i.e., "he did not remain in his true relation". He is called "the father of lies", the principle of the non-existing, the one who deceives by his very nature. "When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own (ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων)", i.e., "out of his own nature and because he cannot do otherwise, because he cannot truly - in truth - be." The lie, as far as man is concerned, is in Satan's suggestion that man will be "lord of the principle" if he will but help Satan to *be*. In actuality, however, man "becomes its slave."[36]

> "For man, that principle, as soon as it wills *to be*, is only untruth and deception. The purpose it serves in the eyes of God we shall not discuss here. As far as man is concerned, it has only a hostile relationship, one of deception and fraud. On that subjective standpoint rest all the passages in John. Moreover, it is impossible to speak more incisively,

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[35] pp. 658f

[36] p. 660

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> indeed, more philosophically, about the true nature of Satan, than Christ does in John. Satan is, in the last analysis, the one who, as such and in his nature, does not exist. He is the one who can yearn to be the one who exists, only by deception and false pretence. For this reason he deceived from the beginning, even before he attained actual being."[37]

g. Satan's Relation to Mankind and to the Individual Man[38]

Satan is "the spirit which came forth from man" and has a general relation to the human race. "Christianity sees the whole pre-Christian time as the time of the acknowledged lordship of this principle. He is the prince of this world, indeed, the God of this aeon, this world-time." Christ stripped it of its irresistible power, but "inexhaustible in its nature it changes its role as, defeated on one side, it jumps up on another." This principle passes through various mutations, but through its changes it remains "the spirit out of whose inspiration arose the whole of Paganism which, in its very ground, is a religion hostile to man." In various forms, this general relationship continues till the end of time.[39]

Christianity, however, gives to Satan a special relationship to the individual man. Since the Fall, everyone is born under the influence of this spirit. This is what is meant by such phrases as "original sin" and "the radical evil of human nature".[40] Like Kant, Schelling recognises the ambiguity and duplicity of and in human experience:

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[37] p. 661 [38] pp. 661-667 [39] pp. 661f [40] p. 662

> "experiences like those of a cordial goodwill which yet permits us to observe that there is in the misfortune of our best friends something which does not displease us; of a secret duplicity in our most intimate friendships which makes it prudent to moderate confidences between even the best of friends; of the tendency to hate those to whom one is obligated - as when he who is in a position significantly to assist another person can be almost certain to have gained in him a secret, but therefore so much the more dangerous, enemy... That Spirit is in possession of man, but before the latter is aware of it or knows it. And being in himself infinite possibility, that Spirit, which is never completely actualised, assumes all forms and colors and shapes, but is never capable of doing anything for himself. Always he needs man. Therefore he seeks to move the latter to actualise the possibilities contained in him, to perduciren ad actum."

> "As the inexhaustible source of possibilities which are ever different, new and changing according to circumstances and situations, this Spirit is the perennial stimulator and mover of human life. Without this Principle the world would go to sleep, and history would come to a standstill and stagnate. This is the correct philosophical idea of Satan. Because on the one hand his nature is inexhaustible in possibilities and because, on the other, it is impotent, this Spirit is like an eternal hunger after actuality. For this reason the Apostle compares him to a hungry lion who goes around seeking whom he may devour in his eternal craving, his insatiable need to actualise, through human willing, that which is in himself mere possibility. Hence the will of man is constantly beseiged by Satan who ceaselessly lies in wait, ready every moment to make the most of every weakness, to seize every opening through which the human will permits him access into itself."[41]

Satan, therefore, is the eternal, inexhaustible source of possibilities (= spirits) of evil. With "a relative omnipotence", he knows how to entrap man and detect every possibility in him. Plato said of Hades, "he is the great Sophist", and Satan, adds Schelling, must be called the Sophist par excellence. Everyone who enters the world must face a life of inner struggle against this universal Adversary. Hence St Paul warns: "Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil." (Eph. 6:11) And Christ commands that we be "as wise as serpents and as harmless as doves".[42]

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[41] pp. 662f

At the same time, Satan is a necessary principle in relation to man, indeed, the necessary moving principle of all history.

> "Satan is a principle which is necessary for the production of the perfect and indubitable truth of creation, for the creation has no perfect truth so long as each opposed possibility has not manifested itself and, by becoming manifest, at the same time been overcome... Hence Satan appears in John... not as a principle which is absolutely cast out by God, but as one who is tolerated by God and belongs to His household..."[43]

Thus Satan exhibits a double aspect, a two-sided nature. He is, in fact, "the nature of whom a double representation is not only possible but necessary."[44] He is (a) the one who constantly opposes, originates discord and division, and calls forth contradiction and evil. And he is (b) a principle permitted and willed by God - at least as a means to the Divine end.

h. Why Christ sees Satan only as the Evil Spirit[45]

How is it, then, that we find "no trace of this irony, this double representation" of Satan in the words of Christ? Why does Christ always see Satan simply as "the

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[42] pp. 663f [43] p. 666 [44] p. 667 [45] pp. 667-670

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evil, the hateful, the un-divine, even the anti-divine Spirit?" Schelling's answer is that Christ came "in order to do away with the works of the Devil." Therefore "Christ is the direct antithesis of Satan, and Satan the direct adversary of Christ." Christ's task is not to explain Satan but to defeat him! And that Christ sees his confrontation with Satan in this way is clear from such passages as John 16:11, John 14:30 ("the prince of this world is coming, but he has no power over me"), John 12:31 ("now shall the prince of this world be cast out") and Luke 10:18 (where Christ predicts Satan's fall from heaven).[46]

This struggle against Satan was no merely external battle as in Paganism, but a struggle "against the very life of the principle, its inner being, its root." And the attacked principle reacted - even physically! The mere approach of Christ called forth pathological outbreaks, especially by those who were demon-possessed. "You are come to destroy us" they cry in the Capernaum synagogue. (See Mk 1:23ff and parallels) In fact, these demoniacs usually appear "in those regions inhabited by pagans, bordering Tyre and Sidon, Galilee and Samaria". And Schelling sees this sickness as "the convulsions of the dying Paganism," although he is aware that such phenomena persist till the present time.[47]

> "Demons are to the Jews pagan potencies, for everything pagan is to them demonic. Pagan elements carried over into Judaism and the boundary

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[46] pp. 667f   [47] pp. 668f

> between the two was shaken by Christ... So the stories of the demoniacs at the time of Christ and in his presence, prove to be nothing but Jewish representations to which Christ has accomodated himself. These disease phenomena have real significance. It was natural that the battle Christ was destined to wage with Satan, i.e., with the real principle of Paganism, should be ushered in by external and physical phenomena.."[48]

Christ was not battling against merely a substantial principle, but against a will. Satan "stood as a will over against a will", and Christ, completely man, saw Satan simply as "the enemy of God and man," who must be "vanquished for the salvation of mankind." Now that Christ has broken his real power, we are privileged to view this principle no longer one-sidedly, but from all sides with complete spiritual freedom.[49]

B. Angelology

a. Angels are Potencies, pure Possibilities[50]

Since the Bible mentions both angels of Satan and angels of God, Schelling feels impelled to investigate the general idea of "angels" and "to fathom the meaning of that peculiar... world of angels which, in Revelation, has the closest analogy with mythology."[51]

Confessing a special interest in discovering connections with his earlier concepts, Schelling sees the angels not as little creatures but as potencies: "they are just pure potencies, pure possibilities."

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[48] p. 669 [49] p. 670 [50] pp. 671-674 [51] p. 671

> "Perhaps analogs to the concept of angels... were given to us in the ἀρχαῖς (rulers), and ἐξουσίαις (authorities), the potencies and powers, of which we spoke earlier when it was said: Christ has been raised above every ruler, authority and power. Hence the question is how angels are related to these rulers and authorities. On this matter, however, a passage in I Peter (3:22) leaves no doubt. There it says Jesus Christ has gone to heaven to the right hand of God and that angels, authorities and powers are subject to him. Thus the angels are here placed on the same level as the authorities and powers (δυνάμεις expresses our concept of potencies even more emphatically than ἐξουσίαι). Christ is raised above all. It is even said: he is clothed with divine glory; for God is the Cause who is above all potencies, since he is the Existent (*das Seiende*) prior to all potencies. Here is illuminated for the last time the great significance of the concept from which the Positive Philosophy set out, the concept of the Existent which is prior to all potencies, the immediately Existent. Only because God *is* before all potencies is he Lord of the potencies. That the angels were considered to be like potencies is found also in Hebrews 1:3f..."[52]

Nowhere does the New Testament say the angels were *created*. (Col. 1:16 is no exception for Schelling). Rather do the angels presuppose the creation, as Satan does.

> "Were there no creation then, of course, there would be no opponent of creation - that is, as Satan was created in and with the creation, so the creation is indisputably a presupposition of angels, i.e., *without* a creation there would be no angels. But this is far from meaning that angels themselves were *objects* of creation. Strictly speaking, only that is to be called *creature* which is the object of a free and intentional production. Angels, therefore, cannot be said to be created in this sense, because they are just pure potencies, pure possibilities. But mere possibilities are not *created*; only that which is actual, i.e., only the concrete, is created. To be sure, along with each actual thing, possibilities are also admitted (I say 'admitted', i.e., they are not *objects* of creation)."[53]

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[52] pp. 671f

[53] p. 673

Angels are thus the possibilities to which the creation gives rise. They "emerge after the creation." "At the moment creation is posited, there is also given a vast number of possibilities, potencies."

> "Just as the being of the world as such is merely a possible one and is actual only by virtue of the divine will - hence 'accidental' in this sense - so, it should be noted, are all things that are antithetical to this being admitted as so many possibilities. We can make this clear from the following example. With the existence of the State are posited innumerable opposing possibilities, i.e., a vast number of possible crimes (against the State) which no human understanding can create or calculate ahead of time. In the same way, when the creation became an actuality, all things opposed to it were admitted as possibilities, as potencies..."[54]

b. "Good" and "Evil" Angels (Spirits)[55]

Good and evil angels represent human possibilities of good and evil respectively. Man was made by God and given dominion over all the works of creation (Ps. 8:6, Hebr. 2:7f). Before the Fall of man, none of the potencies or possibilities posited with the Creation became manifest, for everything was then subject to man and united under him as "the head of creation." With the Fall of man, however, these possibilities became "evil spirits."

> "When man is relieved of his sovereignty (and the Fall of man is nothing but the loss of his sovereignty), then all those subordinated possibilities, potencies and spirits are able to rise up, and man now falls into their power whereas previously they had been in his. Indeed, insofar as those potencies were posited by the creation only as possibilities - to this extent they were all right, they were good (and in this sense one can speak of an original pure and good state of

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[54] pp. 573f [55] pp. 674-679

> the angels). But when, by virtue of the guilt of man, the divinely posited unity, in which everything was to be comprehended under one head (man), is broken up and lost, the potencies come forth with a power and force which they were not destined to have, one which they should not have, and they appear as *evil* spirits."[56]

Diseases, plagues and pestilence are seen by Schelling as "angels of destruction", i.e., "aroused potencies which seek to realize themselves at the cost of the present state of things and of the human race." "Driven as by hunger toward actuality", such evil spirits or potencies seek to devour mankind. (Cf II Sam. 24:16 and Ps. 91) But all such emerge only as a result of the release and elevation of "the Urpotency which is the ground of *all*." All those particular potencies are like offspring of the Urpotency, hence "individual evil spirits are represented as children and as angels, i.e., servants, of Satan."[57]

Evil angels, then, are "potencies which no longer stand under the sovereignty to which they were subject." They are those potencies which *should not be* but which, nevertheless, *are* actualized as a result of man's Fall. *Good* angels are also mere potencies, but in the opposite sense, i.e., they are the possibilities which *should be* but which *are not* actulaized for the same reason, i.e., because of man's Fall. Good angels are all those

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[56] p. 674. As St Paul says, Everything was again brought under one head by the man Jesus. He became the κεφαλὴ πάσης ἀρχῆς καὶ ἐξουσίας as in Col 1:20 (p. 673)

[57] p. 676

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possibilities of good which, because of man's fallen nature, have remained mere possibilities.[58]

> "... every good angel is that which, according to the divine intention, should be actual but is now instead, because of the guilt of man, posited as mere potency or possibility, as not actualized. Hence these good angels are, as angels, i.e., as mere potencies, also not created...As a result of that agitation which was transmitted to the world - when man, through the Fall, cut himself off from his angels and posited that which he really should be as a potency outside himself - everything has experienced a metastasis, a displacement, and is not what it should be, does not conform to its idea, and therefore has its original idea outside itself. This is the reason for the vast number of good angels according to the representations of the Jews, just as Christ also speaks of legions of angels which his Father could send him."[59]

The good angels are good by nature, concludes Schelling, and therefore they are will-less. Poetic fiction has understood them as creatures, but treated this way they are "infinitely preposterous and tiresome."[60] The fact is that they are "will-less spirits because they are nothing but what they should be." Because they have no wills of their own, they are called "ministering spirits" (Hebr. 1:14) tempting man to obtain salvation.

Man, in this life, is quite literally situated "right between his good and evil angels, as Orientals and especially Jews taught." All that this means in Schelling's interpretation, is that man is constantly confronted with, and equally tempted by, ever new possibilities of good and evil. "The good angel cannot part from man", and follows him even into his estrangement from God. Hence Christ says of young and innocent children, "their angels in heaven always behold the face of my Father" (Mt. 18:10), i.e., they have not yet departed.

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[58] p. 679 [59] pp. 676f [60] p. 677

> "The good angels, although they are excluded from actuality, are not beings separated from the creation; although excluded from it, they do not cease to be present there. Every angel is the potency - idea - of a definite creation or individual (hence, since peoples are considered to be individuals, every people also has its angel, its spirit). The relation which man has to his good angel is the only connection left to him in his estrangement from God. Hence the good angels are called God's messengers."[61]

Before Christ's coming, "the good angels were the only connecting links between the human and the divine worlds." At the time of Christ, the Jews "believed that the law of Moses had been given through the intervention of angels" (although "it would have flattered their pride far more" if they could have believed it came directly from God). The New Testament confirms this conviction (as in Hebr. 2:2, Acts 7:54, Gal. 3:19), which must surely have its basis in a "real feeling." In the Old Testament God spoke "especially through angels," but in the New Testament He spoke through Christ "who was to be raised above all angels."

> "Before Christ's birth the angels were restrained and excluded from actuality. Then with Christ's birth they emerged from this state of concealment. At Christ's birth, Luke has a host of angels appear and chant: 'Glory be to God on high.' And at the beginning of his teaching Christ says to the first person who recognized him as the Son of God, as the Messiah: From now 'you will see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man,' i.e., between him and God you shall see a continual, never-ceasing communion."[62]

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[61] p. 678 [62] pp. 678f (Cf. Jn. 1:52)

c. Angel Mythology in the New and Old Testaments[63]

How is it, asks Schelling, that the Apostles were so "full of the idea of those rulers, authorities and powers, those potencies and angels, which are so completely strange to us?"[64] The explanation lies in the fact that the Apostles experienced something "of which we no longer have any experience", namely, the historic transition from natural to free religion. They stood "right on the boundary between the blind and the liberated consciousness." "Their representations are derived from the crisis itself, which they experienced, and in which those powers (of evil) were stripped of their objective strength." [65]

When a ruling potency is unchallenged and is operating uniformly and equably, its power is "felt least of all". But the moment it is attacked, its power is most vividly experienced. Hence, in their life and death struggle with the powers of evil (with Satan, the potency of Paganism, and his cohorts), Christ and the Apostles were keenly aware of the immediacy and objective reality of the enemy.

This mythological element, especially in the Apostles' references to evil spirits, can be clearly seen in Jude 6. Here it is said that the angels "who did not keep their own beginning" (i.e., their state of potency, "for every beginning is above all a potency"), but "left their proper dwelling" (i.e., the place given them by the creation, the place of possibility), "have been kept by God in eternal chains in the nether darkness" (= "potentiality") "until the judgment" (i.e., "their uncreated potentiality is also their limitation", they are in the realm of non-being, the nether-gloom, "to which they are secured with bands unbreakable - 'unbreakable' because based upon their nature." Escape can come only if man by his will delivers them.)[66]

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[63] pp. 679-684 [64] p. 679 [65] p. 682

> "Still more mythological are the statements in II Peter 2:4...'God did not spare the angels which had sinned', i.e., those who departed from the place which was supposed to be their center... by virtue of their tendency to rise out of potency and seduce the human will - God did not spare them but (what is natural and necessary consequence shall be looked upon as a punishment) he has bound them with shackles of darkness in Tartaros in order to keep them till the last judgment... In this passage it would be foolish to deny the mythological character of the statements... The Apostle Peter had not read Hesiod's Theogony and yet he speaks in very similar terms."[67]

Such mythological expressions used by the New Testament writers - especially those referring to evil spirits and angels - are cited by Schelling as support for "the reality and truth" of his interpretation of Paganism and of the real and objective tension between Paganism and Christianity experienced long ago so powerfully by the earliest Christians.[68]

The Old Testament is also full of "innumerable appearances of angels" and theophanies, and the analogy between these appearances and mythological events is too obvious to be denied. They cannot be appearances of the deity as such, or preliminary appearances of the Son of Man (for note that "three men come to Abraham to announce the birth of Isaac"). They can be understood only as a result of that "mythological tension which affected all mankind".

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[66] p. 681 [67] pp. 681f, 680 [68] p. 682

> "The same mythological tension which mediated the representations of the gods, becomes here the medium of actual divine appearance, just as the gifts of the first community are gifts of the Holy Spirit but the medium through which he operated was provided by a state of consciousness which later ceased and was lost. The same potencies which mediated the mythological representations are those which could be, in the Old Testament theophanies, the medium of an actual appearance of the deity. Just as Mythology and Revelation, as we explained earlier, are not distinguished by substantial content, so, in the theophanies of the Old Testament, the substantial potencies are the same ones which operate in Mythology."[69]

d. The Concept of a Literal World-of-Spirits

Schelling felt compelled to discuss Satan and the good and evil angels because "they penetrate so deeply into the whole content of Christianity." But he also had a more general purpose, namely, to introduce a concept "until now quite strange to philosophy", the concept of an actual World of Spirits (eigentlichen Geisterwelt). This does not mean "the spiritual world" in which man already exists, or is supposed to exist, but "another world outside this one."

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[69] p. 683. Schelling notes that Eichhorn appears to have been the first to attempt "the application of the mythological explanation to the Old Testament." He was "an inventive genius" who pointed the way to make many Old Testament stories and representations intelligible, although he himself "did not know how to travel the road." (p. 684)

> "The consciousness of his connection with such a world, the consciousness of being still a universal essence whose weal and woe is shared even outside this world, raises man above the earth, even above nature, which itself becomes more intelligible in its limits when it has another world outside itself.
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> "Fifty years ago, Kant believed he had covered and fully treated the whole domain of human cognition... But for us these lectures have opened up a world of which (they) knew absolutely nothing and which they could not take up into the circle of their concepts without distortion... The fact of a Philosophy of Revelation shows now that there was a whole world which was not embraced by previous philosophy."[70]

Now, Schelling believes, he has provided all that is necessary to understand Revelation "in a formal and in a material way". His Philosophy of Revelation has not gone into practical matters, it has not discussed the morality of the Christian life, but it has confined itself to theoretical considerations and given an explanation of Christianity in terms of its higher-historical context.

A final task will be to "effect the transition out of this higher and inner history into external history." "This transition is mediated by the Church to which the completion of the work of Christ is entrusted." So Schelling will now investigate the history of the Christian Church, and establish the leading ideas in terms of which its development is to be understood.[71]

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[70] pp. 684f

[71] p. 685

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CHURCH AND THE FUTURE UNIVERSAL RELIGION

Back in his Twenty-sixth Lecture, Schelling had envisaged the whole world-process as a succession of three Ages, those of the Father (Creation), the Son (Redemption) and the Spirit (Consummation). Now he presents the history of Christianity as divided into three ages which, in a sense, are but more narrowly circumscribed reflections of the larger world-times. Like Joachim of Floris, Schelling interprets scriptural personages allegorically so as to identify and foretell the history of the Christian Church.

The lectures on the Church (numbered 36 and 37), although appearing last in the Philosophy of Revelation, were actually given first, and only once.[1] As they now stand, however, they fittingly climax the lecture-series with their exciting ecumenical vision.

Schelling stands _beyond_ both Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. He sees the true catholicity and unity of the Church not just in a union of various Christian denominations, but in a simultaneous synthesis of Church and World, of Christianity and Culture. His hope is for "a truly universal Church", a religionless or churchless Christianity (as we might call it today), a "religion for all mankind" in which Jew and Gentile, Christian and Pagan, will freely unite in common worship of the God who is eternal truth. But let us begin at the beginning.

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[1] So avers Klaus Penzel in his "An Ecumenical Vision of Church History: F W J Schelling" in _Perkins Journal_, Vol XVII, No. 2 and 3 (Spring 1964), p. 6. This article includes partial translations of Lectures 36 and 37, that is _W_ VI pp. 686-726.

A. The History of the Christian Church

a. Christianity as Subject to the Laws of Natural Development

Christ knew that when his work on earth was done he would have to leave his disciples, but he assured them he would be with them "till the end of time." This period between the "departure" of Christ and "the end of history" - which will also be the final end of all surviving paganism - is the period of the present historical church. It is to be a period of growth and of continuous struggles against the surviving dark powers of Paganism. Christ's continuing presence does not alter the necessity for "a natural development of the seed which He had planted in the world." To be sure, extraordinary gifts - prophecies, ecstacies, tongues, gnosis - will persist as accompaniments of the struggle of the Christian principle against the surviving cosmic potencies. But such "spiritual gifts" are inferior and transitory - as St. Paul understood in I Cor. 13:8ff. They are to cease when the perfect is come, i.e., when "completely free, perfectly self-conscious human knowledge" arrives.[2]

> "After Christ, through his life, teaching, suffering and death, had planted the seed of a life that would grow into eternity - trusting in its indestructibility and inherent strength - he wanted this seed to take root, to spread, to grow

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[2] pp. 686-688

> successively but irresistibly in the storms of the world, in the alternation of sunshine and cloudburst. It was not his intention to free this seed from the natural and necessary laws of development. He himself says the enemy will come and sow weeds among the whest... and they must grow together till the harvest (Mt 13:24-30; Cf. Mk 4:26, Mt 24:24)... The development of Christianity, therefore, will be subject to the same disturbances, hindrances and other calamities to which all natural development is subject."[3]

Christianity, then, must emerge out of its first ideal state and "advance" in the world in terms of (a) geographical expansion and (b) internal growth, especially "growth in Christian knowledge". This "knowledge" is to be truly human, universal knowledge, the "whole and perfect truth" into which the Spirit will lead us.

> "A structure which gradually embraces all that is human should, therefore, be built on the foundation laid by Christ. This structure, as the apostle says, should grow into a holy temple, a true, spiritual house of God. Nothing, of course, must be excluded from it. Within it all human striving, wanting, thinking and knowing attains to perfect unity. The knowledge in which the Christian world was to grow is not knowledge of the kind which was given to the Apostles through Revelation, i.e., through special circumstances. It is knowledge which under all circumstances, at all times, and in all places, will be possible for man and accessible to him - knowledge, in short, which is truly human (allgemein-menschliche) and thus free, scientific knowledge... (It was something other than free, human knowledge which spoke out of the apostles; they were still under the influence and inspiration of the process which ushered in Christianity.)"[4]

b. Church History as a Succession of Times

As in all historical developments, so in the history of the Christian Church, Schelling sees an example of the "law" of three-ness. He speaks, therefore, of (a) a pre-historical, (b) a historical, and (c) a post-historical Church.[5]

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[3] p. 688 [4] Ibid.

The "pre-historical church" is the Apostolic Church! Schelling here reflects the view that the first century church represents "an age of innocence and potentiality," "that age which is before or outside of history," a state of "merely negative unity from which the Church was bound to issue forth."[6] Since this Apostolic Church is a supra-natural event, the canons of modern critical historiography cannot be applied to it.

The "historical church" begins "at the moment when Christianity becomes a world religion, when it assumes an existence in the world." This means that Schelling sees Christianity embarking on its historical existence only at the end of the first century. It is this post-Biblical period of Christianity which must witness growth, struggle and development, and therefore experience "a sequence of periods."[7] Schelling identifies these periods, three in number, with those three apostles whom Christ specially selected as his "intimate friends and witnesses of the most secret events": Peter, James and John.[8] James is

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[5] pp. 689f

[6] p. 689. Klaus Penzel points out that in Schelling's time this position "had been forcefully set forth in Neander's church historiography." See K. Penzel, "A Chapter in the History of the Ecumenical Quest: Schelling and Schleiermacher," in Church History, Vol. 33 (1964), p. 324.

[7] p. 690

[8] p. 691. Cf. p. 712. Cf. Mk. 3:14ff; Mk. 5:37, Lk. 8:51; Mt. 17:1, Mk. 9:2; Acts 1:13.

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later replaced by Paul, and the whole development of the Christian Church is seen as "pre-figured" in these men. The history of Christianity, therefore, is to be understood as the succession of three ages - those of the Petrine, the Pauline and the Johannine churches.[9]

The primacy of Peter in the New Testament seems obvious. "He is regarded and designated as such by Christ"[10] most decisively at Caesarea Philippi. After Peter's confession - "you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God" - Jesus calls him blessed and declares: "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church... I will give you the keys of the Kingdom, etc." (Mt. 16: 17-19). These words are decisive for the primacy of Peter among the disciples, but priority is not to be confused with superiority. Thus,

> "the primacy, or rather principality, ascribed to Peter by these words, does not at all imply a lasting and permanent domination... Although the foundation is laid first, it is not more important than that for which it is the foundation; rather, it presupposes something loftier by which the structure is completed."[11]

The one to follow Peter was James, who is always mentioned right after Peter. But James was early beheaded, and Schelling regards him as simply "the temporary deputy of the future apostle Paul."

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[9] Schelling says he "received an unexpected confirmation" of this view and of most of the applications of it, when, while reading the last part of August Neander's General History of the Christian Religion and Church (Bd. V, Abth. 1, pp. 438ff), he found "the same view and the same applications in the writings of the famous (11th C.) Abbot Joachim of Flores." He adds: "I made this discovery in none of the earlier church-historians of whom I have looked at many." p. 690n

[10] p. 692. See, e.g., Mk. 10:2; Lk. 8:45; Mt. 16:16; Acts 1:15; 2:14; 15:7; Mk. 1:36; Lk. 22:31f. In such passages, Peter is named first, or exclusively, or acts as spokesman.

[11] p. 693

> "Paul, whom the Lord has chosen to turn from a persecutor and tormentor of the first church into the man who gave it its greatest expansion and glory. When James died, the man who was to take his place was already elected. It is even possible that the Lord put such an early end to James' life because he wanted him to be replaced by the apostle Paul, a more decisive and capable tool... Paul was added to St. Peter to supplement him. This is borne out by the fact that on the oldest lead papal seals both apostles were still to be seen next to each other, Peter to the left, as the position of priority in the Oriental manner, and Paul to the right. There is therefore no indication at first of an exclusive primacy until later when the apostle Peter is alone on the papal seal."[12]

This New Testament "line of succession" - Peter, Paul and John - representing the three periods of the Christian Church, is paralleled by the Old Testament succession of Moses, Elijah and John the Baptist. Schelling characterizes and compares these two triads as follows:

> "In the Old Testament, Moses is the principle of permanence and stability, of what is real and substantial. Elijah is the fiery spirit who develops, quickens, moves and urges on toward a future which is not yet known. John the Baptist concludes the Old Testament and with it the times before Christ. Of him Christ said: 'Among those born of women there has risen no one greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he' (Mt 11:11). Of the three apostles, Peter is the parallel to Moses. He is the law-giver, the principle of stability, the foundation. Paul, to whom one can apply the words in Ecclesiasticus about Elijah: 'He broke forth like a fire and his word burned like a torch', is the Elijah of the New Testament, the principle of movement, development and freedom in the Church. Finally, the apostle John is the parallel to John the Baptist. Like him, he is the apostle of the future; he points to the future."[13]

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[12] p. 694. Cf. p. 695n

[13] p. 695

c. Peter and Paul

When Peter and Paul are compared, "the personal character of Peter appears wholly substantial." In thought and style he is as solid as a rock. He represents in the New Testament the relative Old Testament principle of Law. But Paul is pre-eminently the New Testament principle of activity.

> "In Peter the substantial element predominates, while the person of Paul is characterized by activity. Paul embodies the active, dialectic, scientific and analytic principle. In the New Testament he is pre-eminently the New Testament principle. Each, however, presupposes the other. Peter remains the foundation, but it must be built upon if it is not to turn out unfruitful Peter, therefore, requires Paul. But Paul also would be nothing without Peter. For what Peter has founded, Paul must develop - must free it, step by step, from its limitations and thus affect the whole future.
>
> Through the extraordinary calling of Paul, a principle independent of Peter was established which, in its own way, was just as independent as Peter; and James had to yield his place to Paul perhaps because, by the nature of his relationship, he would not have been sufficiently free and independent of Peter. The spirit of God is not so limited in his means that he effects his work through uniformity. On the contrary, His grandest accomplishments are produced δι᾽ ἐναντίων, by way of antithesis - he who in all antitheses remains the mighty, the invincible One and Only."[14]

The antithesis between Peter and Paul was manifested even during their lifetime. Paul reports his opposition to Peter's Judaizing tendencies (Gal. 2:11) and the factionalism in Corinth (I Cor. 1:12), and stresses that he was entrusted with the Gospel to the

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[14] p. 697

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uncircumcised, while Peter was entrusted with the Gospel to the circumcised (Gal. 2:7f).[15] The struggle between the "Petrine church" and the "Pauline principle" grew through the Middle Ages and resulted finally in "the greatest change in the Church since the Apostles: the Reformation." This change represents the "natural" order of development: "first the body, then the spirit"; first Peter, the Rock, representing the principle of stability, then Paul, the "eccentric", i.e., "the independent, moving, driving principle which is free of the center." [16]

> "If the Church were to persist, to consolidate, and to acquire a historical foundation and make progress, Peter had to rule supreme; for he is the body, the center, that which holds everything together. In Paul, the ideal, the eccentric, predominates... Paul has always held a certain eccentric position in the Church. For whenever he was allowed to speak, whenever his words were heard and understood in all their stirring power, a commotion within the church was the result. Even in recent times, for instance, Jansenism only originated in the Catholic Church because certain pious and very sensitive men were struck to the heart by the fiery words of the Apostle Paul about the grace of God which is given freely and cannot be earned by (good) works. Just so, the writings of Paul are the main source of the spirited convictions of the most eccentric religious sect in England, the Methodists.
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> "The Lord must know why and for what purpose it is necessary in our day and under present world circumstances still to surround Christ and veil him and wall him in with so much that is extraneous and which even conceals him - just as if the world could not bear to communicate directly just with the naked Christ. We have heard of the emotional outbursts, the ecstacies, the riotous behavior (das wahrhaft Orgienartige) which are a part of the large gathering of the Methodists,

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[15] pp. 697-700 Cf. also 2 Peter 3:15ff. [16] p. 701

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> mainly in America, and to some extent of some smaller ones in England, where Christ pure and simple is preached and the doctrine of the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed purely and without any addition..."[17]

> "All the phenomena just discussed are only the result of... the Reformation. And the Reformation, so long in preparation and for which even in the Middle Ages countless victims had shed their blood, was in essence nothing but the finally successful elevation of the authority of Paul over and above the unlimited authority of Peter. If being a Protestant is to maintain oneself outside the church founded on Peter's authority and independent of it, then the Apostle Paul is the first Protestant, and the oldest document Protestantism has to show on its behalf, its *magna carta*, is the second chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians."[18]

d. The Petrine Church: Roman Catholicism

In trying to understand and assess the nature and history of Roman Catholicism, Schelling does not set himself up as its accuser. "It is unworthy of a philosopher to regard the greatest and most powerful phenomenon as something base, worthless and accidental."[19] At the dissolution of the Roman Empire, for example, it was "inevitable" and necessary that the Church step into the Political vacuum. And yet, "all the faults with which the Roman Church is charged are prefigured in Peter's faults."[20] Christ not only calls Peter the "Rock," but also "Satan." It is Peter alone who draws the sword, and it is Peter who thrice denies his Lord.

> "The same man who was recognized as having insuperable faith in Christ as the Son of God, and who had been called the Rock of the Church, becomes a

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[17] p. 701 [18] p. 702 [19] *Ibid.* [20] p. 703

> hindrance because of his worldly wisdom, and is called 'Satan' by the Lord. Can anything correspond more convincingly to this than the combination of stubborn and unshakeable faith and the basest worldly wisdom of which the Roman Church has so often been accused? Another word of Christ! 'If any man would come after me', (and Peter had been appointed Christ's immediate successor), 'let him deny himself... For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life?' (Mt. 16:24, 26) What words, applied to the Church which 'came after him' and which had really gained the whole world!"[21]
>
> "The very moment the Church became a temporal power and even a world power, it fulfilled for itself the words of Christ: 'I have not come to bring peace but the sword.' (Mt. 10:34). Wherever there is political power, there is also the sword. The Church too had need of the sword of Peter, the only Apostle who used his sword at the arrest of Christ. In Peter's character, the same consuming spirit already lay hidden which subsequently destroyed all real and imagined foes of the Roman See with fire and sword; especially in the 13th Century, when wrath descended outrageously upon the so-called heretics of the Middle Ages..."[22]
>
> "Peter's three-fold denial of the Lord also foreshadows things to come... There is a gradation in the three-fold denial. (The first time... he only refuses to explain. The second time... a true denial. The third time... a denial with cursing). One can charge the Roman Church with a three-fold denial of the Lord: first, by striving for complete political power; second, having grown dependent on this power, by making it its tool, demanding bloodshed, and trying to dominate the world with its help; and third, by degrading itself to being a tool of political power."[23]

Clearly, the "true church' has not yet appeared in Roman Catholicism. Like Peter, it has denied its Lord. And yet, this same Church, like Peter, has been given the charge: "Feed my sheep" Perhaps, muses Schelling, the day is coming when the Roman Catholic Church - like Peter -

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[21] pp. 703f [22] pp. 702f [23] p. 704

will weep tears of remorse and return to a truer discipleship.

> "Just as Christ three times told him who had denied him three times, 'Feed my lambs', so the Church, in which so many worthy members lamented the repeated and continual denial of the Lord, has never ceased being the Church of Christ and preserving for all time the foundation which, without such solid support, would long since have been lost in the political storms as well as the contradictions created by the ever restless human mind. But the moment is perhaps not far when the Church too, at a look from the Lord, will remember his prediction to Peter, of whom we read: And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, 'Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.' And he went out and wept bitterly. (Mt 26:75).[24]

e. The Pauline Church: Protestantism

The "true church" does not exist in Protestantism any more than in Roman Catholicism. Protestantism is a necessary but still transitional stage in the development of the true Church of the future. Schelling declares:

> "I am not interested in expressing here a one-sided preference for any particular form in which Christianity now exists. The true Church exists in none of these forms alone. It is the Church which proceeds from the foundation laid by Peter and progresses through Paul to that end which will be the Church of St. John..."[25]

In Schelling's view, everything that comes into the world needs a presupposition, a beginning. This beginning is never that which is to be, but in order to establish itself it must believe that it exists for its own sake. A higher potency, therefore, is always needed to challenge the claims to finality made by what is purely foundational so that development can continue.

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[24] p. 704 [25] p. 702

In accordance with this logic, Schelling sees the Pauline or Protestant principle as that which needs and presupposes the Petrine or Roman Church, and yet must challenge it. The Roman Catholic Church, rigidly grounded in the Petrine principle of stability, needs the challenge of the Protestant Church if the Johannine Church of the future is ever to be ushered in.

> "The more the Church became historically established, the more it concentrated on the exclusive authority of Peter. If something is to develop, its foundation above all must be preserved. Authority rendered, and still renders, Christianity this negative service. Paul's Church was, as it were, a hidden Church which never ceased to be included in the visible Church and to maintain itself within it, but for a long time it could not itself become a visible Church. During the Middle Ages, to be sure, the Pauline principle always made itself strongly felt, though without success. For the more inexorably the real principle shut itself in, the more decidedly it had to shut out the ideal principle. Those who recognized the true situation could have predicted early that a time would come when this principle would break through, emerge in free opposition to Peter's Church, and become a properly historical principle, the principle of a second and new era."[26]

> "The era of the Reformation was preceded by the sighs of Christendom, a general longing for improvement in head and members. Since, however, all the conflicts of former ages had so complicated the condition of the Church that it was unable to produce a crisis from within itself, a break had to occur. The principle which the Church could not hold or shelter or receive, had to emerge independent of it, not in order to discard the Church as a foundation (Dr. Luther himself still calls the Roman Church his dear mother), but to arrest its course toward utter degeneration and later to help it attain to greater glory, to ultimate liberation."[27]

Germany seems, to Schelling, the natural place for the free Church, independent of Rome, to have arisen. That

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[26] p. 706 [27] pp. 707f

"great religious transformation really emerged out of the essence of the German spirit and feeling". What suppressed it in much of Germany "is a secret to no one".[28]

> "In Germany, the fate of Christianity shall be decided. The German people is recognized as the most universal. For a long time it has been deemed the most truth-loving, sacrificing everything, even its political significance, to the truth..."[29]

> "The free Church ... was to arise in Germany and spread especially among the Germanic nations. For clearly the relation of the Roman nations to Christendom is a significantly different one. Among these latter, Christianity appears almost everywhere as something which came to them from the outside. Among the Germans it appeared to be natural. Germany is the wilderness into which the woman of Revelations fled. For her Son, to whom she gave birth with great travail, the dragon, the Adversary, lay in wait. How in the land of the Heirarchy itself has another, a modern, mythology put itself forward in the place of Christianity! To the Neapolitans and Paduans, St. Anthony ...is a much closer, more present consolation than Christ."[30]

Schelling takes occasion to note that this kind of opposition to the Roman Church cannot be found in the Greek Church, even though the latter made similar claims, for Islam overpowered the Greek Church and prevented its further advance. Islam's success, however, had the effect of protecting the Greek Church against the Roman Church and "preserving it as a living contradiction of the pretentious universality of the latter."

> "The Greeks had held that the stone on which Christ wanted to build his Church was not the person of Peter but only his confession. In particular, Origen and Chrysostom understood it this way... Origen said: 'If you think that the whole Church

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[28] p. 713 [29] p. 712 [30] p. 708

> of God is built on Peter alone, what shall you say of the son of thunder, John, and every other apostle? Shall we dare to affirm that the gates of hell can not prevail only against Peter but that they are quite capable of overcoming the others?' As against our view, which opts for the personal meaning of this word to Peter, the above argument can prove nothing of course, for when we understand Peter personally, there is no intention to exclude John and Paul; we simply give them another function..."[31]

Despite his Protestant heritage, Schelling insists that he feels "no call to be the apologist of Protestantism." His concern is with "Christianity in the totality of its historical development", and within that development Protestantism must see itself as merely a transition.[32]

> "My goal is that truly universal church (if 'church' is still the right word for it) which can be built only in the Spirit and which can persist only in the perfect understanding of Christianity, in its real fusion with universal science and knowledge... As long as a Church thinks its sole task is to show Christ from afar, as if he were locked up in a shrine to which no one has the key, so long has Protestantism not borne its fruits.
>
> "If we trace its derivation, the very word ἐκκλησία implies a limitation. The Church is the fellowship of the ἐκκαλουμένων, those summoned out of the world. This means that the Church is outside and opposite the world. Hence, Protestantism need not object if it is denied the name 'Church' by those to whom Christianity is nothing but a Church. It can apply to itself what Paul said when he was denied the name of Apostle: 'By the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them' (I Cor. 15:10).

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[31] p. 708f. Klaus Penzel draws attention to a note in Philip Schaff's History of the Christian Church, Vol. I (3rd ed., New York. 1890), p. 517n. Here Schaff reports that when he asked the dying Schelling (1854) whether he was still convinced of the truth of his vision of Church history, Schelling "emphatically replied in the affirmative" and added that he now "made room for James as the representative of the Greek Church..." See K. Penzel, article cited, Church History Vol.33 (1964) p. 327

[32] p. 713

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> "Protestantism also need not object to the reproach that it is a principle of destruction. For this, after all, is the effect of a mediating power which overcomes the exclusive being of the first power. In this way it has the highly positive effect of producing life which is free and conscious of itself out of the first blind, rigid being. Protestantism must recognize that it is merely a transition, an interim stage, and that it has meaning only with reference to the still loftier stage it is to bring about. But for this reason it alone has a future, one which is cut off for the rigid Petrine Church which, in the end, can attain to a future only with the aid of Protestantism. Foolish is the hope - wherever it may be held - that the Petrine Church will force Protestantism back under its yoke."[33]

So there can be no turning back of history. "The judgments of history are the judgments of God. It is as impossible to reverse them as it is to turn a mighty river back to its source."[34] Roman Catholicism had "the core of the matter", but it did not have the understanding of it. Its unity, founded on Peter's authority, was a blind and external one. "Paul provided a principle by which the Church could again be freed, not from unity, but from blind unity."[35] The whole purpose of Protestantism, therefore, is to make possible this transition to "a unity which is comprehended and understood and therefore free." Had Christianity already attained this goal, it could, without misgiving, "dispense with the residual forms kept over from the Petrine Church, and remove the barriers with which it still has to hedge about this interim stage. Then only would the Reformation be complete."[36] But this third stage is still in the future, and is predicted by the third great Apostle, John.

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[33] pp. 713f [34] p. 714 [35] pp. 714, 716 [36] p. 715

B. The Religion of the Future

a. The Johannine "Church" - the Religion of all mankind

Schelling conceives the "Church" of the future as the consummation of the history of the Church and the world - a synthesis of the Petrine and Pauline principles, of Catholicism and Protestantism, but also of Church and world, Christianity and civilization. The ultimate unity it represents will be "free, desired with conviction, and therefore eternal and permanent."[37] The nature of John, and this 'ecumenical vision' of the future, are eloquently expressed.

> "In comparing the three apostles, one is reminded of Elijah's vision, the prophet whom the Lord passed by. In this vision, there was first a great strong wind which broke rocks and mountains into pieces, then an earthquake and a fire, and finally a still small voice, and in the voice was the Lord. John lacks Peter's violent aggressiveness, always a characteristic of one who begins. He lacks the earth-shaking quality of Paul whose letters resound with that thunder of genius which upheaves and at the same time makes fertile an entire territory of related concepts. John is filled with a gentle, celestial spirit. True, Christ called him the son of Thunder. And perhaps it was in this capacity that, early in his life, he wrote the book of Revelation in which one senses the new conditions and how much of Christianity still lies in the future. In the gospel and in his letters, however, he is already transfigured and taken up into Christ; he speaks to us like a departed spirit. The thunder which can still be detected even here, reverberates in heaven, but its bolts do not strike on earth. John has both the simplicity of Peter and the dialectical acumen of Paul..."[38]

> "Just as in God there are three distinctions, so in Christianity there are three main Apostles. Just as little as God has his being in one person alone, so little does the Church exist in only one of its Apostles. Peter is more the Apostle of the

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[37] p. 716

[38] p. 717

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Father; he gazes most deeply into the past. Paul is the true Apostle of the Son, John the Apostle of the Spirit. Only in John's Gospel do we find ... the glorious words about the Spirit which the Son will send from the Father, the Spirit which alone will lead into all truth..."[39]

"If, as already mentioned, it was decided at the gathering in Jerusalem to divide Jews and Pagans between Peter and Paul, then John - whom we know as the bishop of an already established Church in Ephesus, but of whose actual apostolic work we have little or no knowledge - was apparently meant to be the Apostle of that Church in which Pagans and Jews had become one. Actually, this Church is still a Church of the future, for up to now the two elements can still be distinguished..."[40]

"John is the Apostle of a future, truly universal Church, of that second new Jerusalem which he himself saw descend from heaven, adorned as a bride for her husband, of that City of God from which nothing will any longer be excluded (until then there will be constant opposition). Pagans and Jews alike will enter it. Paganism and Judaism will both be contained in this Church which exerts no limiting restraint. Having no external authority, this Church will exist because everyone will come to it by his own volition and belong to it through his own conviction, for in it each spirit will have found a home. That is why John was beloved of the Lord who always kept him nearest him, for whom the Lord loves, to him he grants the office of making everything perfect.

Even if, in the enumerations of the Apostles, John did not always come third, he would still be the third Apostle because of his significance, his life as well as his writings. He is the Apostle of the ... end of time when Christianity will be universally recognized. Christianity then will no longer be the old, narrow, stunted, puny Christianity of the prevailing dogmatic schools, and still less a Christianity thinly confined to miserable formulas which shun the light, nor will it be whittled down to an exclusively personal kind of Christianity. Instead, it will be a truly public religion - not as a State church or as a High Church, but as the religion of all mankind in which mankind will, at the same time, find the supreme knowledge. In no other form can

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[39] 718f [40] p. 719

> Christianity belong to the Germans. After the Reformation, we must regard it as ours in this form or not at all."[41]
>
> "That Christ kept John for the future is attested most decisively by the story in the last chapter of the Gospel of John."[42] ...John is to be the ruling potency of the Church only in the last time. His function cannot begin before the exclusiveness of Peter is completely overcome and the Church shall have attained its final unity in which there shall be one flock with one shepherd... i.e., at the time when the Lord comes, the final time of the Church."[43]

"If I were to build a Church in our time," concludes Schelling, "I should dedicate it to St. John. But sooner or later a Church will be built which will unite the three princes among the Apostles, for the last authority does not annul or exclude what has gone before but transfigures and absorbs it. This Church would be the true pantheon of the history of the Christian Church."[44]

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[41] p. 720 [42] p. 720. Cf. John 21:22

[43] p. 723 [44] p. 724

RETROSPECT

A Summary Statement of Schelling's Views on the Nature of the Universal Process

A Consideration of Schelling's Contribution to Philosophy of Religion

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SUMMARY STATEMENT[1] OF SCHELLING'S VIEW OF THE NATURE OF THE UNIVERSAL PROCESS

Schelling's General Purpose. One way to describe Schelling's over-all purpose is to say that he is trying to represent philosophically the structure of the universe and the process by which that structure is realized. He sees human history as part of the larger whole of universal evolutionary process. Man, nature and God form an organic whole to be explained metaphysically.

The Three Ages of the World. In his book *Die Weltalter*, Schelling had distinguished three Ages or "true times": (a) pre-temporal eternity (posited as *past* by the Creation), (b) the age of Creation itself, i.e., the *present*, and (c) the age beyond the consummation of this space-time world, viz., future eternity (or post-temporal "time").[2]

The Present Age. The Present Age, i.e., "the entire history of the created world" is itself marked by a succession of epochs which occur according to the primordial sequence of potencies. In other words, the potencies of pre-temporal eternity, i.e., the moments of being ($-A$, $+A$, $\pm A$, to be described below), become principles of becoming, i.e., of the entire creation process. These principles, now labelled B, A^2 and A^3, may also be seen as successive revelations of God as No, Yes, and the unity of both, or as negating, strictly necessary will, intelligent will, and conscious free will (= spirit).[3]

Negative Philosophy. Negative Philosophy attends, as it were, to pre-temporal eternity, hypothetically deducing (or "recollecting")[4] the metaphysical structure of the universe in terms of the "potencies" or moments of being which relate themselves dialectically to one another, combining to form the pattern of the whole and thus describing the necessary process creation must follow and the course history must take. *Positive Philosophy*, however, turns to the second epoch, the facts of creation and history, to find confirmation of the deductions of Negative Philosophy. Hence, in Schelling's "Metaphysical Empiricism," Positive Philosophy "verifies" Negative Philosophy's analysis of "the possibility of things" by appealing to the facts of existence.

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[1] For lengthier summaries see Bolman, *op. cit.*, and Hayner, *op. cit.*, Ch. V,

[2] *Werke*, 6, pp. 307-309, VI, P. 109. Cf. Bolman, *op. cit.*, pp. 189, 196, 58.

[3] Cf. Hayner, *op. cit.*, p. 123

[4] *Werke*, 6, pp. 287f. Cf. Bolman, *op. cit.*, p. 86; Hayner, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

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The Structure of the Universe. In attempting the extraordinarily difficult task of "thinking being as such," Pure Rational (or Negative) Philosophy conceives three moments.[5]

(a) The first thing thinkable is the mere possibility of being, i.e., the pure subject, the pure power-to-be (lacking rational determination and hence deprived of true being) which Schelling labels -A. When -A elevates itself into being, it becomes that which should not be and is designated as B. B is the principle of active negation, and its activation represents evil. Since B should not be it must be overcome, and a process of overcoming begins. But this means that -A (or B) is really the principle of all becoming and therefore, in a way, the key figure in the drama of universal history. It is that which is "blind, dark and unutterable in God" and must be changed from that which denies God to that which ultimately affirms him.

(b) The second primordial potency (+A) is pure object, and as a principle of becoming ($=A^2$) it is "understanding," the idea, will-less but imposing order on (or bringing it forth from) B, i.e., from blind, chaotic will. A^2 liberates B from contradiction and brings it into a higher unity (hence A^2 can be seen as "the ideal image God has of the manifold possibilities within that which can be brought into being"). A^2 is to B as the spiritual is to the corporeal.

(c) The third potency (±A) is Subject and Object as one and completes the concept of being (Schelling is following Fichte). ±A is the "eternal end" of the necessary movement of being, the unity or identity of the infinite (-A) and the finite (+A). As the fusion of nature (-A) and reason (+A) it is the potency of Spirit, and is that which should be, hence it is the good, "that which can be posited as such."

Relation of the potencies to God.[6] The potencies are "not three beings, but one three-fold being which presents merely three aspects." It is one and the same being (or God) which posits itself as subject, then as object, then as subject-object. God as complete being (i.e., as absolutely free Spirit) is not to be confused with the third potency but embraces all three. He (the "pure Godhead" of Die Weltalter) includes all reality within himself: "the potencies are in the Absolute not as potencies but as = He himself."[7]

But God as absolutely free Spirit, i.e., as free from the necessity of his own being, can will a world (a non-eternal being) distinct from himself, and if he does, the three potencies of being (the determinations found within God himself) will be reproduced in the world distinct from him appearing (in such an extra-divine world) as "that which might be" (A^1), "that which must be " (A^2), and "that which should be" (A^3). God, as *actus purissimus*, is materially different from the being he creates, and is formally free to create or not to create.[8] When he does posit himself as -A, this is *not* God (i.e., not God as he *should* be), yet it *is* God in an opposed form of being. In creation God makes himself unlike himself.

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[5] See Part II of this volume. [6] See Werke, 6, pp. 260-283

[7] Ibid., pp. 236, 263, 278

Finally, since it is the same God who is present in all expressions of divinity, the potencies may be understood as individual divinities, i.e., the gods of polytheism are all manifestations of the one true God and the Philosophy of Mythology and the Philosophy of Revelation are not two philosophies but two aspects of the one philosophy.

Why did God create a world? How did he create this being-beside-himself? He *willed* it, replies Schelling . And why did he will it? There are several aspects to the answer.

(a) God inaugurates a process outside himself in order to become "complete Spirit." To be sure, he posited himself as -A, but *not* in order to be -A, for -A *must* be followed by the other two potencies. Hence, "God executes his intentions by way of antithesis."[9]

In the second place, (b), the theogonic process affords him a kind of relief. Prior to their actualization, the potencies repeat themselves in ceaseless succession within the divine being. This "rotatory movement" is Unblessedness (*Unseligkeit*) for God, hence he welcomes an *actual* succession of potencies, a rectilinear movement, in which each is brought to separate expression.

(c) The *final* cause of the creation, however, is *man* (i.e., human consciousness). He is the goal of the theogonic process. In him, as the highest and final creature, God (or being), sundered from Himself in Creation and Fall, will come at last to Himself.

Man - Creation and Fall. Endowed with genuine freedom and autonomy, man is able to initiate an extra-divine process (not merely *praeter* Deum but *extra* Deum) based on the principle -A (=B). Schelling stresses that man, though *formally* distinct from God, is *materially* an extension of the being of

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[8] *Ibid.*, p. 269 [9] *Ibid.*, p.272. Cf. Hayner, *op*. cit., p.135.

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God. "Like all created beings, man's existence derives from the decision of the Absolute Spirit to emerge from his self-containment and, as it were, extend his being in a being distinct from himself."[10] Hence, as potentially God, man retains "the possibility of being brought back" to God, but as independent of God, man can as readily defy the Creator as will to return to him. Thus, in the creation, God has created a being which is both (potentially) independent of him as its origin, yet at the same time materially identical with him and, in respect to his freedom, the same as God. For man is free from the three potencies of process, even as God as Spirit is free from the necessity of his own being.

There is, however, this difference. Man is creature, not Creator. God is by nature the prius of the potencies, but man is "lord of the three principles" only insofar as he preserves the unity with which they are posited in him.[11] Being free, man can turn against the potencies or against the creator. Craving for himself the majesty of God, man sets the potencies in tension so that they will operate in sequence. He thus aspires to be "like God." But this grasping for power displaces the equilibrium of the potencies (enabling man for the first time to distinguish good and evil). -A is set free, and becomes an independent principle (=B, the principle of historical change), the enemy of God and man alike. It takes man captive and delivers him unto death. With this "catastrophe" (the Fall in Christian theology), distinctively human history begins - the tragic story of human consciousness alienated from its true center. "Philosophy has as its highest goal the restoration of that disrupted consciousness."[12]

History, Mythology and Revelation. By making B central, man has invoked to power the second potency (A^2), thus separating it from the Absolute Spirit and from A^3 Theologically, A^2 is the Son or Logos through whom God created everything and by whom He will pacify and reconcile the rebellious creation to Himself.

Now let us return to Schelling's division of history. (i) Pretemporal eternity is the age of the Father (the Son is not yet become an independent personage). (ii) The age of the "Present," "the entire time of this world," is the age of the Son which is divisible into two periods: (a) the period of his suffering, "during the entire age of paganism," when all creation is in the power of B - this is the age of Mythology - and (b) the time of his triumph when, as the second potency, he is elevated to Lord of being - the age of

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[10] Hayner, op. cit., p. 137 [11] Werke, 6, p. 349

[12] Ibid., p. 365. Cf. Bolman, op. cit., pp. 61f, and Hayner, op. cit., p. 140.

Revelation.[13]

The goal of human history is the suspension of all historical difference, and the positing of the one true God both in human consciousness and in his lordship over all creation.

In the supra-historical period, (Paradise before the Fall), "original" or "essential" man knew no historical distinctions, i.e., "the individual," "the nation," "mankind," "human consciousness," had not yet emerged. He is *potentially* human consciousness, but is not yet actually differentiated from God. He thus "posits God" immediately as the essential state of his being. He does not *have* consciousness of God, he *is* it. Hence, after the Fall, human history is literally a struggle to return to immediate rapport with the true God, or better, a restoration of man to what he was originally (not a movement toward God from an originally god-less state).[14]

In pre-history, i.e., between the "Fall" and the beginnings of recorded history, Schelling distinguishes two periods.
(a) The absolute pre-historical age (*vorgeschichtliche*) when natural processes repeated themselves ceaselessly in man and nature but distinctively human events did not yet occur.
(b) The relative pre-historic age (*vorhistorische*) when human events occurred but were not yet recorded. (Before these two was only the supra-historical age, and after them came what we call historical times).

The transition to the age of Mythology. In terms of the theogonic process, the nomadic life of the absolute pre-historic age - no fixed boundaries, no~~t~~ settled habitations, no possessions - resulted from man freely exciting the first potency (or, as Genesis pictures it, man ate forbidden fruit and was cast forth from paradise). Dominated now by the anti-godly principle (B) which has usurped the place of the true God through man's own decision, man for the first time acquires a *religion* - a "false" one, to be sure, since the god B is not God in his truth. Still, as blind will, independent of human will and thought, B is now master of human consciousness. (Man feels perfectly free, but actually he is completely determined.) Hence the religion of this age is a *monotheism* which *seemed* absolute. But, from the point of view of the later polytheism, (which was "produced out of its disintegration"), it is a merely *relative* monotheism.[15]

B is known as Ouranos to the Greeks, Elohim to the Hebrews. But while the Hebrews alone had the true God (Jehovah)

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[13] *Werke*, VI, p. 495; 6, pp. 375 and 377.

[14] *Werke*, VI, pp. 184f.

[15] *Werke*, 6, p. 389.

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revealed to them (biblically: in the Abraham and Isaac story), the rest of the human race turn into the tortuous paths of polytheism (biblically: after the Flood, Jehovah sees this cannot be averted). With polytheism, "mankind" as such disappears from the earth and "peoples" (Völker) with their respective languages and gods appear (biblically: in the Tower of Babel story).

Instead of subordinating itself to the higher potency (A^2), B struggles against it, "striving to present itself as spirit." As a result, B is "unavoidably torn into multiple parts" and presents itself to human consciousness as a One that is a manifold. The plurality of gods are "actually only the One (B) posited as plurality."[16]

The first result was "Zabism," ancient astral religion, which regarded the stars as gods, or rather, as manifestations of one god (the hidden ground of sidereal movement). But this religion of the nomadic man of the absolute prehistoric age - pre-urban man was as "bereft of a homeland as a wandering star"[17] - was only "simultaneous" polytheism and not yet "successive" or true polytheism, for Ouranos (or Elohim, B) still ruled unchallenged.

The Age of Paganism or Mythology.[18] The moment A^2 approaches and challenges B, history (i.e., Geschichte, the relative pre-historical age) begins. A true succession of qualitatively different historical periods is inaugurated. Mankind is separated into peoples, languages, gods. What is happening is that the long succession of struggles between B and A^2 (in their numerous manifestations) has begun. This is "true" (successive) polytheism: a necessary, successive, historical process in which B is overcome by A^2 and in which mankind is led out of that state of undifferentiated unity in which the revolt of B placed him, through a series of moments of historical time, toward restored knowledge of the true God.

This age of Paganism has a long and involved history. A^2, who eventually appears as Dionysus and finally as Christ, woos mankind by a gradual subjugation of the principle of evil. In the twenty-three lectures of the Philosophy of Mythology Book 2, and in the six lectures of the Philosophy of Revelation Part I (lectures Eighteen through Twenty-three), Schelling offers an immensely detailed analysis. Essentially the Age of Paganism falls into four periods.

In the first period of the mythological process, B ("the real god," "the god of the past") appears as masculine

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[16] Werke, 5, p. 172

[17] Ibid., p. 182

[18] Cf. Hayner, op. cit., pp. 152-158

(Ouranos, Elohim). In the second period, B assumes yielding feminine form (the Greek Ourania, the Assyrian Mylitta, the 'Arabian' Astarte, the Persian Mitra) as the result of the approach of A^2 in the form of the Phoenician Melkart or the Greek Herakles (son of Kronos, suffering servant). Thus in this second period Dionysus (A^2) is *born* but when he becomes *operative* the third period begins and B changes again, this time to stern masculine form - e.g., as the Greek Kronos (to subjugate the demi-god Herakles), or the Phoenician Baal, or Moloch among various peoples. At the end of the third period, however, and as a result of the operation of A^2 (Dionysus), a new principle (A) approaches, manifesting itself as Cybele (Phrygo-Thracian), the great mother of all (future) gods and a token of the age to come.

These three potencies are "the real, basic principles of process," and mythology is nothing but the successive coming of these essential gods in human consciousness.[19] As soon as the three potencies have been brought into operation, three complete and independent mythologies make their appearance: the Egyptian, Hindu and Greek.

(a) Schelling traces the struggles of the three potencies in Egypt - as Typhon (Isis), Osiris and Horus respectively - and concludes that Egyptian mythology is dominated as a whole by the real principle, B. (b) Hindu mythology, however, is dominated by the ideal principle, A^2 (-Siva) for Brahma (B) is no longer worshipped and Vishnu (A^3) is detached from Siva. (c) It is only in Greek religion that the mythological process achieves consummation. It is only here, in the fourth period of the mythology, that the first potency is subjugated in such a way that it becomes again the *basis* of that organic wholeness of reality under the lordship of A^3 that was lost in the Fall. That is to say, B is reduced again to potency and, as Hades (god of the past) now appears as the true basis (essence) of *all* the gods (Ouranos, Kronos, Zeus). Simultaneous polytheism, under Zeus, re-emerges.

This fourth period of mythology is complex. Essentially, a new goddess, Demeter, appears and gives herself completely to the influence of Dionysus, thus preparing the final overthrow of B. That which in Demeter was bound to B is separated from him by a kind of birth, as Persephone. In abducting (or raping) Persephone, B (the god of the past, now in the form of Hades) takes with him to the underworld, the realm of the past, that part of human consciousness with which it had formerly been associated. Human consciousness feels this as the loss of something precious (wherefore Demeter is the sorrowing mother).

All this, however, is the purely *exoteric* aspect of

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[19] *Werke*, 6, pp. 393-396.

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mythology. The final explanation and "crisis" of the mythological consciousness is to be found in the esoteric mysteries. Here initiate or celebrant is actually introduced to "the death struggle of consciousness with the real principle and its release from that power by the Dionysian principle itself." Hence the mysteries are themselves "the final crisis of the mythological consciousness."[20] Now Dionysus himself appears in three-fold form (the three potencies) - Dionysus Zagreus, Bacchus and Iacchus - and corresponding to these three divinities as their common consciousness is Demeter. Demeter is finally appeased by becoming the mother of Iacchus and Kore, and the mysteries close with the sacred marriage of these latter two. Thus "consciousness is completely released from the necessity of the mythological process, and a new world, although represented only in the deepest secret of the mysteries as purely future, begins for consciousness."[21]

The Age of Revelation. This age is the sequel and is dealt with in detail in Part III of this volume. Christ is the final appearance of A^2. He inwardly overcomes evil (B, Satan), making possible the advent of A^3 (the Holy Spirit) and the restoration of all things to the Father. Now the life of God will be complete and He will be all in all.

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[20] *Ibid*., p. 443.

[21] *Ibid*., p. 488. Cf. Hayner, *op*. *cit*., p. 160

SCHELLING'S CONTRIBUTION TO PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

To journey through Schelling's Last Philosophy (or even through the summary version presented in this volume) is surely to experience the excitement of confronting numerous suggestive, provocative insights, and to end up with a respectful appreciation of the audacious, persistent, impressive nature of his total achievement. Here is no sharp break with the philosophy of his youth, but a flowering of tendencies Schelling showed as early as 1795. His essentially monistic point of view persists to the very end.

Our task in these few pages, however, must be to attempt some kind of evaluation, both sympathetic and critical, of Schelling's Philosophy of Mythology and Revelation, omitting comment on minor points and concentrating on the larger issues.

A. A "Complete Philosophy of Religion"

Emil Fackenheim observes that Schelling's Philosophy of Mythology and Revelation is "the only significant anti-idealist philosophy of religion which has grown out of the crisis of idealism itself."[1] And Schelling himself believes that his lonely attempt at reconstruction has produced a "complete philosophy of religion", i.e., one which does not confine itself to the so-called religion of reason but seeks to comprehend religion in its historical reality, tracing the course of its

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[1] E. Fackenheim, "Schelling's Philosophy of Religion", University of Toronto Quarterly, Vol. XXII, No. 1 (October 1952) p.2. (Hereinafter referred to as Fackenheim, op. cit., 1952)

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development from the natural, blind, unfree religion of mythology to the free spiritual religion of revelation. In Schelling's judgment, a Philosophy of Religion which ignores that original captivity of man and the subsequent emancipation would be quite pointless and unhistorical. "Philosophical Religion" is the gradual product of these two historical stages, standing above their antithesis in history and affording knowledge of the universal nature of religion. It therefore transcends both abstract supranaturalism and unhistorical rationalism.

As far as Schelling's Philosophy of Revelation is concerned, there are principles set forth there which are surely of the greatest importance. For example (and following Pfleiderer's discussion), the views that (a) religion is a real relation to God brought about in human consciousness (hence, not merely a thought but an experience), (b) that a complete Philosophy of Religion should go to work genetically, tracing the historical development of religion and letting the philosophical knowledge of religion arise as a result, (c) that the ideal aspect of religion should not be considered in abstraction but in its unity with history where it becomes a reality for consciousness, (d) that ideal factors are, in fact, operative everywhere and always in the history of religion, and (e) that will has a crucial role in the process of realizing the religious relation.[2]

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[2] Otto Pfleiderer, The Philosophy of Religion, Volume II. Translated by Allan Menzies, London and Edinburgh, 1887. Pp. 16f.

A crucial question, however, and one which must preoccupy us in these pages, is whether Schelling worked all this out satisfactorily or whether he was prevented from doing so by his "idealism".

B. The Charges of Gnosticism and Docetism

There are numerous critics who feel that Schelling was too much entangled in an idealistic *a priori* style of thought to be able to satisfy his own demands for psychological and historical reality. Pfleiderer is typical of those who charge Schelling with being scornful of ordinary experience and ending up in Gnosticism and Docetism. He writes:

> "This romantic contempt for simple experience, where alone it might be thought reality was to be found, makes Schelling's genetic construction turn out nothing but an ideal logical movement from one notion to another, quite after the manner of Hegel's dialectical development of notions. But as Schelling desires to give something more than a mere genesis of notions - feeling, as he does, that this will not lead him to reality - he converts the logical steps of the notion into realities of a higher power, dramatises their extra-temporal relations as temporal processes of a theogony and cosmogony, and clothes the abstractions of the dialectic of notions in the pseudo-real masks of a god-and-world dramatic process, i.e., *mythologises* them.... He desires to take account not only of notions but of realities, but as he will not look for reality in experience he makes up for himself out of notions a *higher reality* above the actual one, that is to say, he constructs *a world of shades at once sensuous and supersensuous*, and the plays of shadows he produces in it he gives out as the real processes of growth of the Deity and the world's history ... The Schellingians were right in their rejection of the empty formalism of the notional dialectic; the Hegelians were right in their ridicule of the mythological pseudo-realities of the 'positive philosophy'"[30]

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[30] Pfleiderer, *op. cit.*, Pp. 17f (On Bolman's point that Schelling broke with the Gnostics, see Section I below.)

One could reply, however, that Schelling's Positive Philosophy is no mere mythologising of the notional dialectic. It is, in fact, a metaphysical system whose unity is at crucial points shattered by acts of freedom (i.e., acts having no _a priori_ necessity but known _a posteriori_). Furthermore, Pfleiderer has his own definition of Philosophy of Religion. For him it is "a science of the nature and development of the human _consciousness_ of God."[4] In other words, he sees it as "the philosophy of religious experience" and wants to turn it into a purely empirical study. Schelling, therefore, would hardly bother to reply to the attack cited above, but would instead attack the presuppositions of the attacker. What, after all, is a "Philosophy" of "Religion"?

C. Types of Philosophy of Religion

The very definition of a Philosophy of Religion is an important and basic question - both for Schelling and for us. Fackenheim has noted, with justification, that the philosophic concern with the divine is "in sore straits" in our day. On the one hand there are those who would turn Philosophy of Religion into the philosophy of religious experience (a branch of Psychology!) while at the other extreme there are those who would speak only of God and his supernatural revelation (the dogmatic theologians).[5]

(a) Schelling clearly rejects the first alternative, because he sees man as _fallen_. To be sure, because of his divine

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[4] _Ibid_., p. 9.

[5] Fackenheim, _op_. _cit_., 1952. Pp. 16f

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descent, man seeks God. But because man is fallen, his god-seeking and god-finding is a mere unconscious god-*positing*. Posited gods, however, are not true gods. Hence mythological religion (the religion of fallen man) is idolatry. It follows that if the Philosophy of Religion is the philosophy of religious experience, it can be nothing but the systematization of mere products of the imagination and can never find God himself *in* experience.

Since Kant, however, philosophy has been unable to find God *outside* experience either! Reason, as Schelling has shown in Part II of this volume, can reach only the *idea* of the Absolute (i.e., God as the necessarily existent). But this idea, as Fackenheim points out, is one whose form and content are in inevitable contradiction. "Its *content* is necessary existence, but *qua idea* it is non-existent. If there is a God, he is incommensurable with reason."[6] Reason is necessarily driven to seek what it necessarily fails to find. "For the first time since Parmenides, God has become radically inaccessible to the speculative philosopher."[7] Hence, for Schelling, Philosophy of Religion as rational theology (or as the idealistic philosophy of religion of his youth) is impossible.

This crisis of reason brings home to the philosopher the "abyss" between man and God and becomes for Schelling *a crisis of personal existence*, revealing the limits of the autonomous life.

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[6] *Ibid*., pp. 9f. Cf. E. Fackenheim, "Schelling's Conception of Positive Philosophy", *Review of Metaphysics*, Vol. VII, No. 4 (June, 1954). P. 572. (Hereinafter referred to as Fackenheim, *op*. *cit*., 1954).

[7] Fackenheim, *op*. *cit*., (1952) p. 9. Cf. p. 14.

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The reason for this lies in a fact stressed by existentialists in general, namely, that one philosophizes never in a vacuum but always out of an existential setting. Thought, perhaps, can be left in suspense, but life cannot be so left. Hence, "the crisis must end in a leap."[8] But how leap to a God who is unknowable and unthinkable, radically outside human reason, feeling and will? The problem can be solved only by God. "He can become accessible only if He reveals Himself." "The philosopher cannot ascend to God. But he can find Him if He is descended."[9] Hence, as Fackenheim concludes, the philosophy of religious experiences collapses and the Philosophy of Revelation takes its place.

(b) Schelling, however, also rejects the second extreme alternative mentioned above. That is, he has no patience with a theological orthodoxy which, convinced of Reason's impotence, combines with a radical philosophical scepticism. Here, too, Fackenheim's observations are surely correct. Such scepticism, he points out, destroys theology along with philosophy. If theology is explication of a divine revelation, it needs categories of explication, e.g., the category of "revelation," which must be rationally intelligible even if the revelation is not. Without such categories, theology cannot add a single word of interpretation to the revealed document itself. "The philosopher may be correct in lifting revelation above the reach of philosophy. But if he wholly repudiates the philosophic concern with the divine, then he refutes himself."[10]

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[8] Cf. Fackenheim, op. cit., (1952), p. 11, and (1954), p. 572.

[9] Fackenheim, op. cit., (1952) p.12. [10] Ibid., p. 16

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Now Schelling does not *thus* repudiate reason. For him, Philosophy of Revelation is neither a contradiction nor an impossibility. Its task, as Fackenheim puts it, is "to explain the world, using reason wherever possible, but emphasising not what reason includes but what it is forced to omit." "All those factors which escape rational necessity are explained in terms of cosmic acts of will"[11] - for example, the creation (an act of cosmic will accounting for the element of rationality and order in the world), the Fall (an act of wilful rebellion on the part of original man, accounting for the irrational and chaotic elements, externality and evil), and redemption (a free and gracious divine act). History itself is the arena of freedom, i.e., of a theogonic process in which a gracious God overcomes estrangement through love.

D. The only possible "Philosophy" of "Religion"

Schelling's Philosophy of Religion is, then, in his view, truly *philosophy*, and its content is truly *religion*. That is to say, its essential *content* is that divine-human history which is seen both in "mythology" - where the succession of gods are the struggles of God as he really intervenes to relieve and modify the pressures of the cosmic powers upon the human consciousness - and in "revelation", the true content of which is Christ Himself, the Logos of God. (For if God is more than reason - κρεῖττον τοῦ λόγου - he can be known only if He

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[11] *Ibid*., p. 12

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has revealed Himself.) Yet Philosophy of Religion is also philosophy for, "because of its dialectical relation to the divine, reason can by itself understand the need for revelation and its meaning when it takes place."[12]

This point of view has much to commend it as an approach to Philosophy of Religion. It avoids (i) any unjustifiable assumption (to have found the true God) on the part of rational theology, (ii) the philosophical scepticism of theological orthodoxy, and (iii) the reduction of Philosophy of Religion to mere psychology (for the purely empirical study of religious experience, unable to find a criterion of religious truth, fails to justify the concept of religious truth itself). Fackenheim's appreciative comment is well-deserved:

> "The philosophic concern with the divine is in sore straits in our time. For in one of the two dominant camps the divine has vanished, and in the other, philosophy... If man's concern with the divine is perennial, and if it is at least in part rational, then what is needed in our time is renewal and rejuvenation. Those concerned with such a renewal would do well to take note of Schelling who first struggled with a crisis that still casts its shadow over us."[13]

Let us, however, pursue a little further the question of the contributions and weaknesses of Schelling's Philosophy of Religion.

E. God and Evil

One of Schelling's most daring and important speculations concerned the question of the origin and nature of evil. Already by 1809 Schelling was convinced that the system of Identity was incompatible with belief in the reality of freedom and evil.[14] He therefore dared to place evil as well as freedom in God - the only alternative to denying them. But to save the concept of an all-perfect Being, he came to hold that in God there is only the possibility of evil which, in Him, is never actualised.

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[12] Ibid., p. 15

[13] Ibid., p. 17

Evil, in Schelling's view, is not mere absence of good or merely a means to a higher good. It is a positive force (the "demonic"), and its terrible reality shatters the identity of the Absolute. And yet, Schelling rejects Dualism! Hence this desperate problem: "there is only one Absolute, yet every act of freedom is a new Absolute. The Absolute is total harmony, yet evil is a terrible necessity."[15]

To explain the origin and fact of evil in the world, Schelling does two things. (i) He develops - under Boehme's influence - a theory of divine personality. (ii) He resorts to the doctrine of a cosmic Fall from absolute identity, through an original act of finite freedom. Personality, for Schelling, is always a unity but never a simple unity. As Fackenheim puts it: "it is a perpetual actualization of selfhood, the conscious and purposive control of irrational underlying potentialities," always involving "a dark ground which is the source of uncontrolled vitality and a self which unites, controls and directs this ground." God is "the Absolute Self, holding in command and control his own dark ground" which "slumbers in the still night of potentiality, as the negative source of divine vitality. Its function is not to be but to be potential." Hence,

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[14] Ibid., p. 5 Cf. Gutman, op. cit., p. 26.

[15] Fackenheim (1952) p. 6

> "it may be called the demonic in God since in itself it is dynamic power without order or control. Schelling can therefore say the daring words: 'The Deity reigns over a world of horrors.'"[16]

Then man appears, free over against God, and the moment comes when he chooses to make himself like God. Man is the infinitely tragic Prometheus, at once divine and anti-divine, at once right and wrong, his God-given autonomy involving him in guilt against the divine. But man fails to make himself absolute, fails to control the divine ground, and "succeeds only in tearing the latter out of the divine harmony and giving it demonic actuality." The world and man with it fall under the destructive power of evil (B). Thus the source of evil remains in the Deity, but "in such a way that this source is not evil in the Deity. It becomes evil only when torn out of the divine identity."[17]

Because of this understanding of evil, Schelling rejects the ontological argument since it assumes a Most Perfect Being whose nature it is to exist and who is then invoked to "explain away" all the world's imperfection and evil. Instead, Schelling's God is eternal contrariety, alienating himself from himself; not a system but a life, a dynamic process.

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[16] Ibid., pp. 7f. [17] Ibid., p. 8.

F. History and the New Metaphysic

Schelling's insistence that God or Reality is dynamic process, a living, growing, unfolding actualisation of possibilities, embracing Unreason as well as Reason, meant a final and emphatic rejection of traditional static metaphysics. The original dynamism of Schelling's earlier thought - derived in part from Fichte and paralleled in Hegel - becomes, especially after 1809, a thoroughly evolutionary metaphysics or theology. Reason can explore possibilities but cannot know *a priori* what an evolving God will actually choose to do. Reason must proceed descriptively not deductively if it is to grasp reality as a gradually evolving process.

It would appear that this aspect of Schelling's thought provides "a more adequate ontology for the understanding of human history" - as Paul Hayner claims it does.[18] In fact, Hayner shows convincingly how Schelling's "evolutionary ontology" develops from its earliest and relatively a-historical expression in the *System of Transcendental Idealism* (where Nature and History are respectively the real and ideal sides of the one Absolute Ego) to its mature expression after 1809. Now Schelling can do greater justice to "the complexity and uniqueness of human history in general and of religious history in particular" than any static metaphysics had been able to achieve. Since history does not repeat itself, Schelling thinks its movement must be conceived teleologically. If history is to have meaning, he thinks it must be set within the context of universal history.

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[18] P. Hayner, *op. cit.*, pp. 166-169

There are many, of course, who consider it unmitigated pretension for a philosopher to claim to know the meaning of history. Nevertheless, Schelling, as we have seen, is making this claim. He is arguing that a theogonic process is verifiable in the events of history. Even Hayner's sympathetic study weakly concludes that Schelling's view is "too audacious"! Hayner questions its "usefulness" in increasing our "knowledge" of history and suggests that Schelling's theosophical categories are "inadequate".[19] But such "criticisms" are no more than the raising of an eyebrow! Not only is the origin of one's categories irrelevant to the question of their usefulness, but the very notion of "usefulness" is hardly a useful norm for judging metaphysical visions. For this is a vision. Schelling is indicating a perspective, a way of looking at history (not adding to the furniture of history) and his vision fares well if tested against norms of "breadth", "coherence", "explanatory power" and "momentum".

It is reality's history, then, not just its structure, which the Positive Philosophy sets forth. But does this knowledge of the meaning of history imply historical and metaphysical determinism?

G. Freedom

Consistently, Schelling insists on the freedom both of God and man. There are, however, certain difficulties in his discussion.

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[19] Ibid., p. 170

With respect to the freedom of God, Schelling holds that the Creation, for example, was a perfectly free act of the divine will. Yet he also suggests a number of "reasons" for it. For one thing, Schelling says it was *fitting* or becoming for the deity "not to remain for ever in that *actus purissimus*, which we might also call an eternal theogony." For another, he declares that the Deity, being incapable of envy (as Plato said), felt the *need* to become another so as to be known by another. He even suggests that Creation offered the Deity the *only* relief from the original theogonic movement which was rotatory and amounted to *unblessedness*. Such "reasons" for the creation certainly make it difficult to see how creation was a perfectly free act of will in which God willed an end which to himself was accidental.[20]

Human freedom, too, seems to be questionable as it conflicts with historical determinism. Hayner underscores the point that after 1809 "Schelling conceives of man's life as a part of the life of God; and since God Himself lives in the autonomous life of man, there is nothing outside man's will - or so it would seem - which can limit its freedom of expression. But still the outcome of history is never in doubt." Hayner continues: "the principles of the theogonic process describe a determined course in the actions and reactions of historical movement. Hence the philosopher *can* deduce in advance the pattern which history will follow"[21] -

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[20] Cf. Pfleiderer, *op. cit.*, p. 20. [21] Hayner, *op. cit.* p171.

- if, we must add, God decides there is to be history at all! Hayner sees this as "a remnant of rationalism" in Schelling which later evolutionary metaphysicians such as Bergson succeeded in eliminating. For Schelling, of course, such an "elimination" would be unthinkable. Perhaps two things should be said. First, the obvious point that some freedom of choice is not logically or psychologically incompatible with historical determinism or predestination. Secondly, how are we to understand (rational) self-determination? Is "self-determinism" (whether in God or man) an instance of freedom or of determinism? Or is it not rather the (existential) fusion of both! Schelling, it would seem, has not perpetrated a contradiction but perceived a paradox. **Freedom is "possibility".**

H. The Essence of Christianity

In Schelling's discussion of Christianity, there are numerous insights and emphases that are provocative and controversial. To illustrate, we shall draw attention to his views on New Testament miracles, on Christianity and morality, and on the essence of Christianity.

The New Testament miracles, for Schelling, are neither proofs of Christ's divinity nor mere tales for an "enlightened" age to rationalise away. Instead, they are to be understood mythically (as Strauss later understood them). To be sure, on the one hand Schelling can regard them as Jewish fables, framed on the suggestions of the messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. But as in Part III, Ch. 3 (B) above, Christ's miracles are such "only in relation to the common order of things. In the higher order to which Christ belongs they are merely natural." For the New Testament, Christ's "miracles" are signs of the Will of God at work in the world - as not a few New Testament scholars would today concede.

Turning to the question of the ethical aspect of Christianity, one must acknowledge the charge that Schelling tends to overlook it. Perhaps here he exemplified the characteristic (earlier) Romantic pre-occupation with aesthetic and intellectual aspects of religion. On the other hand, he is surely correct in insisting that "morality is not specially distinctive of Christianity, which could never have lived in the world by a few moral maxims, e.g., love of one's neighbor."[22]

Finally, it is clear that for Schelling Christianity is older than Creation. The Idea of Christianity is an eternal and necessary one. God foresaw the Fall of man and pre-planned the remedy. There is a supra-historical history to which belong the free acts which begin and which will end empirical history. The Christian Revelation could not be accepted by Schelling as an authoritative source of knowledge of supra-history, for he wanted to ground not build a Christian Theology. Revelation is an historical fact, a result requiring a context which it does not immediately present to experience. Its content is supra-historical and this can be grasped by reason (although reason cannot grasp the contingent, finite history of empirical existence.)

The incarnation is not to be understood as, exclusively, a single event in time. "Christ's coming" was felt in Paganism and in Judaism. Judaism, in fact, is seen as the link between the mythological process and revelation. The boundary between positive Christianity and what is pre-Christian or extra-Christian is not impenetrable but porous. At the same time, Schelling can still understand the genesis of Christianity as a specific historical event and the personality of Jesus (the high point of the incarnation from eternity) as a historical phenomenon. When still a very young man, Schelling could write: the biography of Jesus was actually lived but it was written before his birth!

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[22] Cf. Pfleiderer, op. cit., p.8.

In today's terms, Schelling would see Christianity not as the religion _of_ Jesus but as the religion about Christ. His sympathies would be with the Kerygmatists rather than with the "New Questers." Christianity is Christ, and Christ is a divine being from eternity. Some New Testament scholars today (e.g., R. H. Fuller) believe there is something about the Jesus event that legitimizes the Kerygma. Schelling would insist that it is the Idea of Christianity which legitimizes the event and the New Testament record (not _vice versà_). The New Testament books, he says, "are monuments necessary to history but not to faith." The Christian Idea is independent of them and not to be sought in them. Their value depends solely on the adequacy with which they express the Idea.

Naturally, Schelling has been charged with Docetism. Pfleiderer declares: "Schelling makes the ideal contents of the biblical history, which as such is of course not history over again, but idea, and nothing more, eternal determination of the divine will or eternal truth, itself another history behind the actual."[23] Vampire-like, continues Pfleiderer, this history, destitute of reality, sucks the reality from actual history. The result is that Docetism which is the natural and ubiquitous consequence of Gnostic mythology. "Its essence consists just in this, that it makes of the ideal contents of history another history behind the actual."[24]

In defence of Schelling, one must refer to his explicit repudiation of Docetism. Christ was no Scheinkörper (see Part III, Chapter 3, Section B, above). Nor is it correct to say that for Schelling the historical is a mere accident of the doctrine. It is, indeed, the doctrine itself. "The principle content of Christianity is Christ himself; not what he said, but what he is and did." The difficulty of understanding how Jesus is at once divine and human is, of course, notorious. On Schelling's behalf, and in the light of his discussion in Part III above, one must say again that our philosopher does not resolve a contradiction (by opting for a "liberal" Jesus or a docetic Christ) but preserves a paradox (as does both the New Testament and Christian Orthodoxy).

I. Can "Existence" and "Idea" be synthesized?

In our introductory remarks we noted that with respect to the question whether Schelling was an Essentialist or an

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[23] Ibid., p. 29 [24] Ibid. Also Cf. Section I.

Existentialist, his reply would be (as Tillich's was) "fifty-fifty". This has at least two meanings.

(a) First, that Existentialism is "always based on a vision of the essential structure of reality" (Tillich). As J.H. Blackham has pointed out, for most Existentialists there is in some form "the transcendental world of Being-in-itself, encompassing subject and object and therefore inaccessible to thought but capable of being encountered in certain ways" (or approached or experienced or heard or deciphered).[25] Accordingly, the Existentialists have developed a number of methods for communicating their insight into the nature of Being.[26] They do not, however, consider themselves to be abolishing thinking in favor of existence. They simply ask, says Blackham, "for the frank recognition that thought, as abstraction and reduction, necessarily is in tension with existence and can neither overshadow it nor take its place."

> "The assimilation of Being to one level, is the typical error of idealism as of positivism or materialism. Reduction is the capital philosophical error.
>
> "The tension between thought and existence which has to be lived and can never be resolved, which

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[25] H J Blackham (Ed.) Reality, Man and Existence (Eight Great Existentialist Thinkers), Bantam Books, 1965. P.4f.

[26] Blackham (op. cit., pp. 9f) cites Kierkegaard's dialectical method, Nietzsche's "perspective" thinking, Jasper's logic of philosophising, Marcel's "secondary reflection", Husserl's phenomenological method (and Heidegger, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty are all his students). Even Jaspers, who insists that there can be no ontology because Being cannot be the object of a science (with which Marcel agrees in principle) explores "the modes by which we encounter Being".

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> makes the human condition and is the source of human reality, is neither futile nor fatal. On the contrary, it is the established philosophies that are futile and fatal, because they establish themselves in the world - and in place of the world."[27]

Just so, Schelling long ago felt the need for an existentialist ontology, or an ontological existentialism. "It was just _man_," he said, "who drove me to the final desperate question, Why anything?" The question of human existence drove him to the ontological question of the wider being which is the context of his life and apart from which human existence is but an abstraction.[28]

(b) A second reason why Existentialism and Essentialism must go together lies in Tillich's point that man can and must express his encounter with the world in terms of language, hence of universals. From another tradition, John Passmore makes the same point. "How is it possible," he asks, "in language, to contrast experience as we live it with experience as we conceptually describe it, _seeing that to talk at all is to make use of concepts_? And how else, if not in language, can such a contrast be made?"[29] Schelling, for his part, clearly perceived that the insight _that_ a thing is, gives me more than the mere _concept_ of the thing, and that while "a concept is possible without a real discerning (Erkennen), a discerning is not possible without the concept."[30]

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[27] _Ibid_., pp. 7, 14f

[28] Cf. John MacQuarrie, _God and Secularity_ (Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1967), pp. 96ff.

[29] John Passmore, _A Hundred Years of Philosophy_, Pelican Book A927, Baltimore, Md., 1968. P. 503. (Italics mine)

Hence we can understand Schelling's decision that to account for the existence of the world and for its intelligibility two sciences are necessary. One must comprehend the Idea, the essence of things, the content of being; the other must explain the actual existence of things. As we have seen, these two sciences are but two aspects of one science. Reason (in the first or Negative Science) discerns the noetic structure of being and finds, in Idea, that God is essentially actuality. But it fails to grasp existence. Hence it becomes ecstatic and posits existence as Prius (and itself as Posterius), i.e., it affirms by a free act that God is actually actuality. After such an act of faith in the immediacy of existence, reason proceeded deductively (in the second or Positive Science) and essence was made subject to existence.[31] As Bolman puts it: the task of the second science is "to demonstrate that the logical structure of conceptuality applies to factual existence only when the previous relationship of logic and actuality is inverted."[32] What before was exemplary (vorbildlich) now becomes actual (wirklich). And the Last-Philosophy outlines empirical history (at least, the history of the religious consciousness) to provide a posteriori demonstration that the realm of eternal truth, the suprahistorical, actually underlies our empirical history. The supra-historical, as Bolman insists, "_is_ the principle of the intelligibility of empirical history." Hence Schelling is convinced that in his _Spät-philosophie_ he has found "the unity of reason and existence behind the epistemological division of subjectivity and objectivity."[33]

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[30] Schelling, Werke, 6, p. 57f. Cf. Bolman, op.cit. p54

[31] Bolman, op. cit., pp. 55, 63f [32] Ibid., pp. 55f.

In thus declaring the eternality of the Logos (with its Noemata eternally dialectically interrelated and thus representing God's necessity) while yet insisting on the blind, impulsive, creative character behind the Logos (i.e., God's Freedom, pure actuality free of all noetic determinations), Schelling was "following the ancients". In doing so, however, Schelling broke definitely with the Gnostics, as Bolman rightly points out; for he treated "the factual history of mankind as the return to the knowledge of God as Lord of Being."[34] Christ's coming reveals not only that Nature and History are the life of God but that God's ultimate sovereignty is to be restored. The counter-essential Fall represents the Iliad of human consciousness, while human history represents th Odyssey of man's gradual _return_ to God as sole Lord of Being. In God's transcendent reality, Schelling believed, being and thought, essence and existence, subject and object, freedom and necessity and all other dualities, can be brought to a final unity.

All this, as Fackenheim has noted, represents a

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[33] _Ibid._, p. 64 [34] _Ibid._

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tremendous effort to escape the dilemma posed by Hegel and the Hegelians. "Hegel confronted his age with a choice: either an all-inclusive dialectical system or the salvation of the particular brought about by the surrender of all system."[35] Schelling's response, as we have seen, was to try to combine a dialectic of essence and necessity with an undialectical doctrine of existence and freedom. He insisted on recognizing both "the *a priori* meaningful" and "the *a priori* meaningless" as real characters of the real world, and took as his problem that of showing *how* their togetherness in the same world could be understood. Fackenheim, however, wonders whether the Positive Philosophy really *does* explain both essence and existence, necessity and freedom, meaning and meaninglessness. In a word, Can "existence" and "idea" really be synthesized?

Schelling's answer, as Fackenheim puts it, is that "existence" and "idea" can never be synthesized in *thought* but only in *will*. Fackenheim's critique of this solution reduces to an examination of how Schelling's speculation enables him to answer his three ultimate metaphysical questions.

The first question is: Why is there anything? Why not nothing? And Schelling answers: because an Absolute Existent has freely *willed* it (i.e., willed to set the potencies in tension).

The second question is: Why is what exists in discrepancy with what ought to be? How are externality, absurdity and evil possible in a creation which, as such, has none of these? Why is the world questionable? Here Schelling answers: because original man, the third potency - who alone is free to will or not to will, and in whom the other two potencies are synthesized - *freely willed* to tear himself loose from the Absolute Existent thus causing the Fall of the entire creation. If we ask Schelling how he knows that God willed a world and that man fell, he simply points to the "facts". And "empirical facts", as Fackenheim notes, are simply those which, according to the *a priori* principles of the Positive Philosophy, "can be explained only by a novel act of cosmic *will*".[36]

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[35] E. Fackenheim, *op. cit.*,(1954), p. 568

The third question is: Why is there reason? Why not unreason? How can rationality be grounded? To this question, however, Schelling fails, in Fackenheim's view, to arrive at a convincing answer. Fackenheim agrees with Schelling that the first principle cannot be a Universal Reason, for while this would justify rationality it could not explain either the world's irrationality or its own existential ground. Schelling says that the universal essence exists only if there is an absolute Individual.[37] The first principle, therefore, must be an Individual Existent. But "reason cannot flow necessarily from the essence of the absolute Existent, for the latter has no essence," says Fackenheim. "Nor can it be the product of an arbitrary will, for this would make rationality

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[36] *Ibid*., p. 580 (Cf. Schelling, *Werke*, 8, pp. 129f)

[37] *Werke*, V, p. 768

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itself an accident, and destroy the a priori."[38] Hence Schelling concludes that reason is a "necessary accident" of the Absolute Existent - a conclusion which, for Fackenheim, is "surely a mere admission of failure."[39] Fackenheim drives home his point:

> "If the Absolute Essence is in any sense necessary to the Absolute Existent, this necessity encompasses the Absolute Existent and we have returned to the system of reason; but if the absolute Existent is really beyond reason, the absolute Essence is not a necessary accident, but accident pure and simple.... The transition from the individual Will which is absolute to the universal category of free will cannot be made. Schelling himself appears to admit this when he remarks: 'Here is the last limit which cannot be transcended.'"[40]
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> "If the dialectical principle is true that there can be only one absolute, but if at the same time this absolute cannot be reason itself, how is reason to be grounded? Rationality must be justified in some way; without such a justification speculative metaphysics, at least, is impossible. Schelling's Positive Philosophy clearly understands this problem. It fails to solve it."[41]

Fackenheim's ultimate criticism, then, is that Schelling's Philosophy of Religion fails to ground the world's rationality. If Reason is a "mere accident" (as Fackenheim puts it), then the Negative Philosophy collapses, robbed of its ontological foundation, and the Absolute Existent, in turn, ceases to be of use as the principle of a cosmic system. If Reason is not metaphysically ultimate, its presence in the universe cannot be explained!

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[38] Fackenheim (1954) p. 581. [39] Ibid., p. 589. (Cf. Schelling, W, V, pp. 496, 513). Schelling, of course, noticed in Aristotle the distinction between essential and non-essential accidents. (See W, V, 526f; and Part II, end of Ch. 2, above).

[40] Ibid., p. 581 [41] Ibid., p. 582. Cf. Bolman, op. cit., p. 47: "How do universal statements apply to such immemorial (unvordenklich) being which is actually prior to all thought, without potency, in itself necessary, and in the highest sense individuality?"

The problem, however, may be seen to be just the opposite. For Paul Hayner, for example, reality must be more than rational - God must be κρεῖττον τοῦ λόγου - if reason itself is to be explained metaphysically! The fact is that the later Schelling came to see that his own earlier rational idealism - Reason as ultimate reality making itself its own object - could not account for the existence of reason itself. Hence Schelling's decision that Will, not Reason, is original being. And hence the insight of the Positive Philosophy that reason is something that has evolved.[42]

It is important to note that as early as 1812 Schelling understood that God's beginning can be neither intelligent nor unintelligent. He wrote: "What is the beginning of an intelligence (in itself) cannot again be intelligent, since otherwise there would be no differentiation. Yet it cannot be utterly unintelligent, because it is the possibility of an intelligence." Hence, he concluded, it must be "something in between", "a native, instinctive, blind, not yet conscious wisdom."[43]

God, then, must have a beginning of himself in himself which is different from his existence as potentiality is different from actuality. "Every beginning," as Schelling says in Part II above, "lies in deficiency". And the beginning of becoming lies in -A, "the non-existent with its hunger after being."[44] After 1801, Schelling designated God's beginning as the Urgrund or Ungrund (the primal ground or Unground), or, again, as the "abysmal, eternal nought" of the Plotinian-Dionysian-Eckhardtian tradition and of Jacob Boehme. For only against the ungrounded can the ground arise, since nothing can become evident without resistance.

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[42] Hayner, *op. cit.*, p. 169

[43] In his Reply to Jacobi, quoted in *Bolman, op. cit.*, p. 28.

Now, to find the root of existence in God as "nothing" means two things. As the "Existent" ($+A-A^{\pm}A$), He is the formless omnipossibility (gestaltlose Allmöglichkeit), hence "nothing" in the sense of μὴ ὄν not οὐκ ὄν. But as the Principle (A^{0}), that which is the Existent, He is "nothing" in the sense of that which is beyond all essence and potency, potenzlose, Freedom, Will (will willing itself). Therefore, Freedom, Possibility, Antithesis and a Primordial Willing belong to the beginning. Of course, there is no ultimate Dualism for, as we have seen, what Schelling calls the "Absolutely Absolute" is the ultimate Indifference of both reason and will, theos and cosmos, A^{0} and $+A-A^{\pm}A$. Since God is "eternal contrariety", able to alienate himself from himself, the procession of things from God is God's self-revelation (in Nature and History). Self-revelation must mean estrangement, for "every nature can be revealed only in its opposite."

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[44] W, V, 475f. See Part II, Ch. 2, B, above.

God's primordial action thus expresses the union of absolute freedom and absolute necessity. Schelling allows the world-process to create with free necessity, unconsciously at first, in the manner of an artist. (Art, in Schelling's view, is the perfect union of freedom and necessity). In the beginning, as the myth of creation has it, is the unity of essence and existence, an intelligible existential world. And in the end, the unity is re-established as man becomes re-united (absorbed?) with the absolute self, his personality expanded into the infinite, free from necessity, contingency, consciousness and personality. God is all in all.

Essence thus comes to have existence (=rationality has come to be) through a movement from involution to evolution by means of contradiction. As Schelling put it in The Ages of the World: "Activity or life is such only by the sequential process of an evolution of its own contradictory nature toward a state of immobility, stability, will-less will, which lies beyond inert matter."[45]

Existence and Idea "must always be in tension", writes H. J. Blackham. And Schelling would agree that this tension will always characterise history. The unity of existence and idea and of all other dualities is present now only ideally, but one day really. That is to say, before History and after it, in pre-temporal and post-temporal eternity, primordially and eschatologically (so to speak), "essence" and "existence"

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[45] Bolman, op. cit., p. 76

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are one. Originally they were not yet differentiated, finally they will be reconciled. The non-being of pre-temporal eternity is the same and not the same as that of post-temporal eternity. Since God's existence (as Cosmos) is an "accident" "necessary" to his own completeness, it would appear that for Schelling existence alters essence (in God as it does in man).

J. The Root Metaphor

Perhaps the way to see the point of Schelling's solution is to keep in mind the root metaphor of his metaphysics. He thinks of the universe not as a machine or as a mind or even as an organism (although this latter is at times the case) but as an emerging self, evolving selfhood, overcoming blind drives. The development of the "life" of reality itself is the macrocosm of which the development of human life is the microcosm. As early as Die Weltalter, Schelling wrote:

> "Just as man, according to the old and nearly threadbare saying, is the world on a small scale, so the processes of human life from the utmost depths to its highest consummation must agree with the processes of universal life. It is certain that whoever could write the history of his own life from its very ground, would thereby have grasped in a brief conspectus the history of the universe."[46]

Note carefully: If one could only "write the history of his own life from the ground up" he would have grasped in brief the history of the universe! In Schelling, as later in

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[46] Ibid., p. 93f. Cf. Hayner, op. cit., pp. 106f.

Heidegger, we must learn of Being through human being (*Dasein*) - and each remains a *mystery* until it acts. Press the analogy! Is there a reason for my existence? Am I not a *necessary accident*? *That* my parents gave rise to me is an accident, but that they gave birth to a human child is no accident! That a child should never grow into an adult is a non-essential accident, but if a child does grow into an adult that is a *necessary* accident (for he *could* not grow into a horse or an oak tree). Furthermore, if I am rational - and *that* I am can only be known *a posteriori* - this may be seen as a *necessary* accident, for only human babes are such as *can* become rational. To be sure, I may also be irrational, and sportive and benevolent and much else. But *if* I am, these are brute actualities except inasmuch as some may reveal rationality, in which case they too are necessary accidents!

Just so, there is no *rational necessity* why God should actually exist (i.e., no necessary reason why he should exist as a world, i.e., no *reason* why there should *be* anything), but *if* he does exist, rationality will be a necessary accident of his existence. We should remember that for Schelling the whole history of creation is the cumulating *proof* of God's existence. As in the human individual, so in the universe, there was in the beginning only potentiality, freedom, and blind, instinctive will. *Then* came the actualization of potentialities. (Or, as we might also put it: once the world was matter or nature, then matter and life, then matter and life and mind.) "Reason is something that has evolved" says

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Schelling. It is not the cause of Spirit. but exists only because perfect spirit exists. It is a tool, says William Barrett, a tool that spirit has forged. The original human situation is an indifference of reason and unreason. What Fackenheim says of the Absolute is also true of the individual, to wit, "it might express its will in an indefinite number of ways, rationality being but one of them." Nevertheless, Fackenheim concedes that the leap of faith, brought about by a search for God which is at once rational and existential, "is not merely arbitrary, since it arises out of the human predicament, the human situation in which rationality is rooted."[47]

Why should God (reality) be regarded as, in part, rational? "An unpredictable, absolute will," says Fackenheim, "on the evidence of the 'facts', reveals itself now as a God, now as a devil, now as an omnipotent jester, explaining no more than that nothing can be explained."[48] That God is divine, demonic, sportive, magnanimous, Schelling would not for a moment deny. He would simply repeat what has been demonstrated in the Pure Rational Philosophy, viz., that if God becomes at all His becoming will reveal the actualization of rational structures. But that he becomes, and that He is more than rational, is known a posteriori by what he does (Creation, Redemption). For God "to be" means to enter into the objective theogonic process with free necessity.

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[47] Fackenheim (1954) p 574.

When he was but twenty years old, Schelling wrote: "the main function of all philosophy is the solution of the problem of the existence (Dasein) of the world."[48] And since all theology and metaphysics is an attempt to express the inexpressible, the task of philosophizing called forth from Schelling sixty years of prodigious effort. No wonder he expresses himself in oracular utterances half-way between poetry and metaphysics - speaking, for example, of God and the world having as common ground "the incomprehensible basis of reality", or of "existence as self-affirmation" or of God as "the infinite affirmation of himself" or of the objective world as the unconscious poetry of the spirit creating himself.[49]

For Schelling also wrote, when he was twenty years old, "the moment a thinker believed he had completed his system he would become intolerable to himself."[50]

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[48] See Bolman, *op. cit.*, p. 12

[49] Cf Adam Margoshes' article on Schelling in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Ed. by Paul Edwards), Vol. VII New York, 1967. P. 309.

[50] See E. Fackenheim (1952), p. 5.

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SCHELLINGS WERKE

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